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# MARGARET ETHEL MACDONALD

## A MEMOIR BY J. RAMSAY MACDONALD

WOMEN'S LABOUR LEAGUE

SPECIAL EDITION

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Mrs Jones
from
Molly

n 1914

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*Margaret Ethel MacDonald*

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1885

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# MARGARET ETHEL MACDONALD

By

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

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## *Preface*

I HAVE been asked if I would reproduce, by way of preface to this edition, the section on the Women's Labour League written for a memoir circulated amongst private friends, and I agree with pleasure, though to some extent it but repeats what is written in this book:

"It was with a deep purpose arising from her views of woman and the home that she started the Women's Labour League in 1906. True, the immediate object of the League was to help the Labour Party, but when she discussed it with me before the work was begun, she always put other purposes first. 'If I did not share your ideals, how wretched would our life be!' she often said; 'and if I accepted your absorption in public work



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simply because it was making you a public person, what a drag would that vanity be upon both of us!' Her project met with opposition and coldness in several influential quarters, but she had made up her mind that her full purpose could be carried out in no other way, and nothing under such circumstances daunted her. What was her purpose?

"She had seen the husband working in the wide educative field of public service, drifting away from the wife walled in within a stifling sphere as though she were in purdah, and she grieved at the consequences. She became full of the conviction that something had to be done to bring women out of their prisons and give them a place in our movement. And after much thought and consultation with me she came to the conclusion that that could only be done if women were made responsible for some work of their own. Trade Unions admitted women, the Independent Labour Party enrolled them as members. But she thought that was not enough. Women's duties made it impossible for many of them to attend

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the meetings called at times most convenient for men; women's training made it equally impossible for them to give their best and their most to work which was controlled and conducted by men. So she founded the Women's Labour League in the same spirit as the pure knight rode out to free damsels cursed under evil spells. Through it she was to supply him who toiled in the Labour movement with a wife who helped him in all his doings, who understood him, who was not misled by false ideals; she was to build up Labour homes on the solid foundation of mutual sympathy, of common counsel, of hand-in-hand effort; she was to lead out women on to the open field where the tilling and the sowing were being done to hymns of faith, and reveal to them the joy of those who were labouring there, and enable them to share in it. Her conviction was that it was only when the woman knows life in all its fulness of aspiration that she can turn inwards to her home with a heart full of affection for her husband and children. Then, they are not merely her mate and her offspring. They are the

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creatures of tragic fate and heroic endeavour. A great pity and a great love endear them to her. Only when the home is shadowed by the clouds, and cheered by the sun of the outside world does it become that haven of rest and garden of healing which she thought it ought to be.

" For that, and nothing meaner than that, the Women's Labour League, the best-beloved of the offspring of her thought and labour, was to stand. How shadowed have been its opening chapters! If the great things of life awaken with a dirge and grow through sorrow to triumph, the Women's Labour League has begun well. That wonderful woman, its secretary, Mary Middleton, whose saintliness bloomed like a rare flower in a village garden and was unknown beyond a small community, died this summer, and my wife passed after her ere the autumn was out. But if any influence can cross the border between Life and Death, theirs is now guarding and cherishing the stricken nursling which they, with a handful of other devoted women, coaxed into life, and led affectionately into the world."

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To this I need add but a sentence or two upon which recent occurrences lead me to lay some emphasis. With dread my wife saw the threatenings of a sex war and the attempts of men to stave it off by a kind of sentimental chivalry. The woman armed against the man she regarded as a portent not as a blessing, and demands for sex equality inspired by that vision, she considered to be ominous. All her influence in the Women's Labour League was directed against that. Steadily throughout her life and her work she denied that ill might be done so that good might come of it. The evil of the day could not safely be cured by the application of any idea or principle which had no place in the ultimate ideal. For the perfect relationship of co-operation between men and women in the spirit of affection and mutual respect she strove. The family wherein the weak were protected, the strong treated as responsible equals, the burdens mutually borne, and the community kept together by willing sacrifices in which each accepted a natural part, was the ideal she held of the Socialist state, and the

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goal which she urged the Women's Labour League to pursue. In carrying out this she was sometimes not a little timorous lest the property notions and the old-fashioned ideas of liberty held by some sections of modern feminists should mislead the whole democratic Women's Movement. This is indicated in the book, but I bring it out here specifically and definitely, for if it be missed not only is an essential part of her intentions overlooked, but something which explained a fundamental characteristic of her being is lost sight of.

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD.

LOSSIEMOUTH.

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## *Chapter* I

# ANCESTRY

WHERE has love walked more tenderly with death than in the Tweed dales, or where have brave hearts fought against fate more grimly and chivalrously ? The songs of the valleys are the defiant lilts of the soldier and the heartbroken croonings of the maiden. A brief romantic life and an untimely pathetic death, that was the fate which made the hills and dales of the Tweed country sonorous with ballad and song. To-day one walks by grey abbey and green howe, by bustling stream and fretting loch, by moss-grown churchyard and ruined peel, and the spirit of sadness embraces one as when darkness gathers round a sunny prospect or when doom closes upon happy hopes. I revisited these haunts the other day so as to begin this memoir. The winds blew over the Moffat dales like invisible troops careering to battle, the showers passed along the hillsides like ranks of grey



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ghosts returning to the clash of swords, the moon ploughed through the clouds like a golden galleon tossing on boisterous seas, and St. Mary's Loch lapped moodily beneath the window like time fretting upon eternity.

Just on the confines of these bewitched valleys and streams is Kelso on its hill, standing respectfully behind the gaunt ruins of its abbey. There are the homes of my wife's family on her father's side.

Documents show that a property in Kelso known as the Mill Wynd, which terminated in a wall laved by the Tweed just opposite the point where the Teviot joins it, was bought in 1742 by her great-great-grandfather. It had been in possession of the family, however, since 1667. They were damask-weavers by trade, and their connection with Kelso is traceable through the parish registers as far back as 1645—probably to 1597. In this Mill Wynd was born in 1799 a son John, and he, listening to the call of the wide world, left his old home and came to London, where he prospered by applying to business those canny and upright Puritan virtues taught in the Relief Kirk. He married a cousin, Alison Hall, whose father also came from Tweeddale, and

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the eldest of their children was baptized John Hall.

The world was to prosper with him too, and if capacity to use wisely and generously the goods of this earth is a fit title to their ownership, no one had that title more indisputably than he had. A student of Graham at University College, London, and later of Liebig at Geissen, he succeeded to the Professorship of Chemistry at the Royal Institution once held by Faraday. He seemed to have caught the spirit of his predecessor and friend, for no man I have ever met combined more graciously in his personality learning, humility, and charity. His hands were always open, and in the giving of gifts he concealed from the left the generosity of the right. Happiness always beamed from a face which to the end never lost its look of boyish openness and serenity.

He was keenly interested in public work, and at one time thought of entering Parliament. In 1868 he contested York as a Liberal. But York was corrupt, and he did not buy it. Later on he was approached by friends to contest the Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities, but he declined, and it was upon the London School Board that he

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spent his enthusiasm for popular enlightenment and advancement. There he sat for twenty-one years, becoming chairman of various committees; for a time he was vice-chairman of the Board itself. He was the friend of every teacher in his district and was known to every scholar in his schools. He joined the Board when enthusiasm for an educated democracy was fresh in the minds of the Liberal intellectual classes; he remained unaffected by the wearying of that enthusiasm; and when the Board, sadly altered in its composition, was rent with destructive bickerings, because, in the place of religion, London was offered sectarian husks, he fought in the lamentable tragedy for the reality, and finally declined to be renominated. Listening to him speaking of those times one seemed to be hearing the voice of a generation whose splendid spirit of uprightness in public affairs and whose masterful grasp on public needs had gone down to the grave and been forgotten even before its human remnants had passed away.

Nor, with my present purpose in view, must I omit another aspect of Dr. Gladstone's mind. He lived through the time when a sprightly science claimed that it

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had subdued all knowledge and all faith. He welcomed that science, but he clung to his faith. He was no timorous explorer, no weak-kneed apologist. When the discoveries regarding human origins and unwritten history were frightening the pulpits and giving birth to the vainest and most absurd schools of defenders of the faith, he wrote and spoke frankly, accepting the discoveries and whole-heartedly embracing theories like evolution, but denying that either the one or the other made a dent on the Christian shield, though they may have rendered useless some of the less carefully tempered weapons. So he promoted his prayer-meetings which for years were features of the British Association gatherings, he annexed science for his Christian Evidence lectures and pamphlets, he led his Bible-class through the pathless confusions to which the times had brought it. He always went out cheerfully to meet the truth, and the occasional pain and inconvenience of its handgrasp never clouded by regret the welcome he offered to it. To him, truth was the wisest expediency, and the passing interests of the world had such a slender hold upon him, that that was not merely a moral

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dictum to which he gave intellectual assent, but a rule of life to which he paid daily homage.

He married twice, first in 1852, May, daughter of Charles Tilt, the publisher, by whom he had seven children, and then in 1869, Margaret, daughter of the Rev. David King, LL.D., sometime United Presbyterian Minister at Dalkeith and at Greyfriars, Glasgow, and latterly at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Westbourne Grove, London. Of that marriage my wife was the only child.

In the blood of my wife's mother mingled the hard unimaginative worldliness of the Ulster peasant, tremendously capable and practical on the one hand, and yet, on the other, stern and unbending when moved by its conceptions of rectitude. Dr. King's wife was an Elizabeth Thomson, whose father was Professor James Thomson of Glasgow University. Originally the Thomsons hailed from Ayrshire, but crossed to Ireland "in the time of Claverhouse," and the family traditions tell of a warm sympathy for the rebels of 1798, and of deep curses for the Lord Londonderry of the time. Thus it fell to the lot of my wife to know intimately in her younger days

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two brothers, her great-uncles, who, each in his way, stood amongst the elect of mankind—James and William Thomson, the latter ultimately accepting a peerage and becoming known as Lord Kelvin. It was of James she talked most. He was her knight; an entry in her journal runs: "Sat at tea looking at Uncle James." He was the man who would not traffic with the verities and would bow no knee to any Baal. He declined to put his signature to articles of faith in which he had no belief, and so voluntarily surrendered a Cambridge career; later in life his following of the Faraday tradition of unworldly pursuit of knowledge kept him away from the garish highways of popular esteem and hid his great genius. The influence he had with her never weakened, for he taught her to be true to herself, to keep pure, to follow whatever road it seemed good for her to walk upon. Of Professor James Thomson, Professor John Perry, one of his pupils, has borne testimony: "He was a pure-minded man, whose good influence is now widely felt. . . . Every one of us could laugh at his well-known foibles, but . . . there was not one of us who had not a loving memory

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of him as distinguished from a mere liking and from mere respect." Often and often when wounded and crushed by those members of her family who made life hard for her when first of all she stood by Mr. Gladstone in the Home Rule controversy, and, still more, when, latterly, she became a member of Socialist organisations, she would end her regrets by saying: "If Uncle James had lived, he would have understood."

A considerable number of letters and some diaries remain to reveal to us the qualities of Margaret King her mother. She belonged to that class of women whose lives are inspired by strenuous piety. She pursued the doing of good breathlessly, and there is a characteristically mid-Victorian air about her worship—a little stiff, a little self-conscious, perhaps a trifle boring, but deadly earnest. Prayers, prayers, prayers! Prayers for kindred, prayers for friends; prayers for shortcomings which are marvellously hidden from eyes that now read those diaries, prayers for children who have to be whipped; prayers for the saved, prayers for the lost, prayers for those swerving between the two ways.

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On July 31, 1868, she wrote after a visit to Pevensey Castle:

"It was beautiful to look from its rugged outline to the distant hills beyond in dreamy summer light, and through its broken arches on the wide blue sea, and solemn to think of the generations that have lived and passed away since this castle was new and entire in its grim strength with no rich ivy clothing its walls. And yet the same hills and sea! I kneeled down in a lonely shady place and prayed and committed my whole life to Him who is 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' . . . And the beautiful glimpses of the distance reminded me of the lines:

> As through some ruined abbey's broken walls
> Glimmers all night the vast and solemn sea,
> So through our broken hopes the brightness falls
> Of an eternity.

But all the time my heart was crying out in its loneliness, and all the beauty of ruin, and hill, and sea, and moonlight called for one to share in the thoughts they gave, one nearer than any there. I have felt at different times lately as if the old nest is stirred up, and my place should no longer be there. And I know of one better and nobler than

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any I know else, any hero of olden days or present time, any doer of golden deeds, whom I could love and honour with my whole, whole heart. All is in God's hands, and if prayer bring the wish of the heart, He knoweth how much I pray for this."

Of the complete happiness which came afterwards she wrote just a year after the visit to Pevensey: "I think it was thought of long ago." *

But withal, Margaret King's cup of joy was shallow, and bitter dregs lay at its bottom. The bridal days were overcast by the utter breakdown in her father's health, and pitiful are the letters she wrote on that. The gaiety of love tones down into the disquietude of filial concern as the weeks go and peace is withheld from the father's overwrought mind. Then come the happy days of marriage, when the wife, proud of her companion, launches into new ventures of her strenuous piety and makes herself the guardian of the souls of an ever-widening circle of young friends. There is an old-world quaintness about these diaries.

* An entry in her diary states that "Thomson and Tait" called together after her engagement to congratulate her on her "borrowed grandeur."

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Through them wander the voices of the long ago. But they end before they have well begun. Their pages are few. A happy flute-note of the joy of a coming child plays through them towards the end. Preparation, plans, prayers are made. On March 19, 1870, there is an entry of thankfulness. It is the last. The blotting-paper lies where she left it, and then there is a wilderness of blank leaves. The child was born on July 20, 1870, and the mother died on the 16th of the following month.

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## *Chapter* II

# YOUTH

PEMBRIDGE SQUARE lies in the calm dignity of pillared porticoes, bow-windows, broad steps, and massive front doors, shut out from the bustle and the mixture of folk which fill the neighbouring Bayswater Road. The houses stand alone, double-fronted, and separated from their neighbours by a space frugally narrow, but enough to give them that air of detached independence which surrounds the English middle-class home of substantial possessions. At its eastern end, looking out upon the long narrow stretch of square, and catching the glows of the setting sun, is No. 17, where Margaret Ethel Gladstone was born on July 20, 1870. A little tearful service of dedication was performed upon her there a few days later, and soon thereafter her mother, comforted by this promising beginning, all she was fated to see and to know, died, leaving her to the care of others—of God, as she wished. For



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her own mother, hoping to have the child, asked her, "Who is to have charge of her?" "God," whispered the dying woman. "Your mother wished you to be called Ethel," her father wrote to her, "because she hoped that your character would be a noble one."

She had sisters by her father's previous marriage, and they welcomed her; she had aunts and a grandmother, on her mother's side, and they doated upon her. She lacked for nothing. Amongst her possessions are books of photographs taken between 1880 and 1895 which explain much. They are mostly family gatherings of her mother's people—groups taken in comfortable rooms, picnics on the hillsides of Scotland, tea-parties in gardens—gracious ladies, distinguished men. She appears in them; they mark stages in her growth. To look at them one can see domestic peace, family happiness, affectionate kinship; pride, perhaps—an air of superiority, perhaps; but they remain to tell how the young girl was wrapped in affection and how life opened for her in sunny peace.

I remember very vividly the reposeful dignity of her home, the calm detachment of the dining-room, the more lightsome and

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playful atmosphere of the morning-room, and the quiet, reverent man who dwelt there. The household abounded in charity. Pensioners blessed it; philanthropic institutions, like the Latymer Road Mission, were kept going by it. It was toned by those Puritan traditions of faith and service which have been associated with Clapham, but the years which had passed since the lights of Clapham had waned and had gone out, had softened creeds and had broadened minds. Tolerance and humility had come to smooth out hardness, as the mosses and the weatherings of time make the aggressive vanities of man assume a pathetic beauty of aspiring but unfulfilled desire. Religion is wider than any church—"My creed is larger than any church in Christendom," Dr. Gladstone once wrote to his wife—honesty more acceptable than any creed, were the principles which the child breathed so soon as she grew up to understand what she was being taught. Her father's scientific pursuits, together with the people whom she met, told her of a wonderful world teeming of interest, and of entrancing secrets which were to be discovered by devoted and systematic pursuit. Her first appearances at a Friday evening lecture at the Royal Institution, which was

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on January 20, 1888, and at the British Association, which was in 1890, are carefully noted in due course. Those were coming-of-age events in the Gladstone family. And she had many companions of her own age, not a few of whom remained devoted friends when playing and school days were over, and the laborious and exacting work of the world was being done.

"I remember still," one of them has written, "how, even in the very early days when we played together, there was something about Maggie Gladstone which seemed to tell us that she was different from the rest of us. She was always very happy, but she seemed 'bigger' (I cannot think of a better word) than we were."

Miss Lily Montagu, another school friend, and one who remained a counsellor and comrade to the end, writes (and though the letter anticipates events and years, and is really a summary of the whole of her life, it had better not be split up, perhaps):

"As a schoolgirl we were always impressed with her extraordinary brightness and the *ease* with which she did all her work. She was so versatile and saw *through* a problem as soon as it was broached. She

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learned by rote with no apparent effort. Her scientific inheritance seemed to make it easy to her to examine a subject in detail as well as to recognise it as a whole. I knew her in school rather as a senior. She was three and a half years older than I, and among schoolgirls that makes a difference; but she was Ethel's friend and used to come to our tea-parties, and she was never patronising to other girls younger than herself. She brought with her a fund of gaiety and good spirits and was full of very pleasant chaff. I always wondered at her happiness —for she was motherless; but I knew that she did nevertheless live in an atmosphere of affection. We always expected 'Maggie,' as we then called her, to have any amount of general knowledge. She knew so many clever people and *all about* everything, as we thought. She did especially well in those classes in which the teachers had a large way of treating their subjects.

"In social work Margaret first introduced me to a small boys' club in Kensington, where she often spent evenings and helped the boys with handwork, played games, and was jolly with them. She showed that especial gift — hospitality — which distinguished her through life. She knew how to

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make every kind of person—boy, girl, man, or woman—at home, and her manner was always exactly the same with every sort of person. I think she was rather different from girls of her set, because whether she spoke to man or woman it made not the slightest scrap of difference. She was not self-conscious during her intercourse with men, and that is why she became 'a man's friend.'

"She was immensely interested in all scientific questions on account of her home surroundings. I well remember being with her during the British Association week, which occurred soon after her engagement with you. She was blissfully happy, and talked very freely. She was so convinced that she herself would live to be very old, and she spoke without a scrap of mournfulness of the joy of making you feel sure that she would carry on your work, as she thought she must outlive you. She thought that the happiness of her married life would be quite sufficient to make up for the fact that it might not be of long duration.* After her marriage she never referred to this subject to me again. She used often to worry about

* I had been ill just before, and a serious organic disease threatened me.



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your overwork, and on the last occasion when I saw her before she was ill she told me that her desire to go to India was mainly because she wanted you to have a rest, and this was the only way she could give it to you. She hated leaving her children, but on the whole she wanted most to be with you.

"You ask me to tell you something about her engagement. I only remember her supreme happiness, and the way she used to chaff me about having brought you together. She christened me 'God-mother,' and on the last day of her life she told me I had always been a dear good 'God-mother" to her. She was immensely amused by the conventional attitude of some of her family towards your concerns, and although she occasionally had waves of resentment regarding these conventional views, she generally managed to laugh them away, and rather pitied the people who possessed them.

"As time went on, she and I for a while went our different ways in social work, but through our connection with the Women's Industrial Council and the National Union of Women Workers, we met very frequently, and it was she I think who helped me to see the connection between so-called

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philanthropic and industrial work. She showed the greatest interest in our Club's Industrial Association and spoke for us many times. I used often to tell her I should have remained a tinkerer only, if she had not widened my horizon, and she thought my work among individuals supplemented her rather bigger work.

"On committees she was always extremely fair; she had a tendency to give the other side whenever possible, especially when that side represented the views of the workers. She had a very proper horror of letting industrial bodies degenerate into mere middle-class organisations. She, however, welcomed suggestions from people belonging to the other classes and encouraged them to take interest. We sometimes wondered at her extreme patience with amateurish people. We always felt in committee that Margaret was peculiarly capable of summing up a situation and clearing points so as to make business progress. She would not let a matter drop until all the details were decided.

"I have a letter somewhere in which she wrote about little David, and said how she had received letters from all sorts and conditions of people which had helped her

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very much, especially from your colleagues in the House, whose usual reserve broke down in the face of a sorrow of which they had felt the emotion. She told me when we met afterwards how she used to say 'Good morning' and 'Good night' to her little boy, and how the message of one lady who had told her what a privilege it was to have a child 'behind the veil' had brought great comfort to her. She never felt very far from David."

As early as 1883 she began to keep an engagement-book record of her doings, and she continued this until the end of 1896, the year of her marriage, when life appears to have become too full to be recorded day by day in the space of two or three square inches. But owing to her marvellous memory she could dispense with an engagement-book. She could remember for weeks ahead all her engagements. She never forgot a name. Even when travelling in India and meeting many people with unfamiliar titles she recalled them without hesitation. As I never could remember names we had many amusing diplomatic experiences whilst she was playing into my hands and getting me out of my difficulties.

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The entries in the diaries are wonderfully systematic, and include the books she read, the letters she received and wrote, and the money she spent, as well as the doings of the day. One or two extracts will show what she was then doing. This is from the earliest book: "Going to crèche with Flo. X. to lunch. German Reed's entertainment" (January 4). This is from a later one (1885): "Got up; talking; doing Scripture answers to *Our Own Magazine*; reading *In his Golden Shell*; out with B. to St. Mary Abbot's, very crowded; out again in middle of service to St. Paul's, Vicarage Gardens; Hospital Sunday; walk in gardens; home; did plants, etc.; dinner; talking; did Scripture for *O. O. M.*; talking to children; up to F.'s class; sweets and talking; tea in the garden; Uncle James T.* came for visit; watching him at tea; talking up in the morning-room; all out but F.; did Scripture answers for *O. O. M.*; learning new texts for school; up to bed" (June 14). Again (1893) she notes: "Read; breakfast; writing; off to Hoxton; visiting Mrs. C., Miss P., etc.; dine at home; Miss F. ill in bed; talk with her; off to help at sale of work, arranging stall; selling penny

* Professor James Thomson.

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things; many women in; tea; home; raining heavily; E. and J. to dinner; out to boys' club; bed."

These extracts will suffice to indicate how her days went and what note she made of their passing.

The diary entries were supplemented by a somewhat fuller journal narrative for the same years, but this was not written always at the time. A day came when the note-book was taken up, and her mind went back for weeks and months to recall what had happened. In some respects the daily jottings, the mere skeletons of what she was doing, give a better idea of how time was going, and how the girl grew.

The picture which she has left of herself when she was still attending school at the Doreck College, Bayswater (a private school for young ladies) was that of a somewhat serious young person, rich in friends, methodical in habits, clever at work, a shrine of early piety, who was enjoying life. And the photographs of her as she was then are of a bright-eyed, chubby-faced maiden, alert and interested. The garden where she was nourished was very sheltered and very sunny, and she grew up where "falls nor hail nor snow, nor any wind

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blows loudly." When she left the Doreck College, she continued for some years to attend classes in history, geology, architecture, literature, political economy, Greek, logic, and other subjects at the Women's Department of King's College.

The engagement of a sister, and saying good-bye to her school days (1887) make her stop for a moment arrested by the shadow of Time darkening her path, but the pipes of youth play again. Weddings are happy events. The world, which for a time was like a jungle full of shadowy dreads, and not to be entered save in the handclasp of some wiser protector, becomes a sunny field again, where the young lady may wander in delightful ease following her own thoughts and choosing her own paths and dreaming-places.

Two circumstances went to cherish and enrich her. The first was the wide range of her family circle and friends, the second was holidays. In the diaries her mental and spiritual development is shown most clearly, not in reflections upon life, but in her joy of living in those summertimes spent in Scotland or on the Continent. A summer holiday with her mother's relatives on the Kyles of Bute in 1884, left a

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permanent influence upon her. She would not rest content until I went back there with her years afterwards. It was all sadly changed, but she was not one of those who mope when they discover that memory entwines the past with fairy garlands, and bathes it in the light of enchantment. She begins her first journal at the Axenfels Hotel, near Brunnen (August 8, 1886). She had visited Geneva, Chamouni, and other places with her family three years before, and this was her second trip abroad.

"I do like being abroad," she writes on its very first page. Everything is fresh to her. She is free. The fascination of the unregulated, rough life of simple nature steals upon her. "Our guide dealt round the bread to us, cutting slices of it with his clasp-knife, and we put the slices of the meat on the top of the bread, eating them together. It was very absurd and certainly not at all elegant, but it was great fun for a change, and we all enjoyed it."

That is often written and far more often felt by the schoolgirl on holiday. But it was more to her than a passing thrill. It was one of many experiences which led her back to the maternal lap of the simple

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and the natural where she found strength and repose all her life.

In the following year she was in Scotland, amongst the hills and the woods by Nethy Bridge and Aviemore with her mother's people. She returned later on, and we never passed that part but she revelled again in her youth and felt the happiness of her springtime. We frequently went that way of an early morning on the Highland Railway on our summer journeys to Scotland, and we never came to Loch Ericht but she beamed with joy at the memory of times and friends gone away behind in the past.

In 1888 she was in France and the Riviera and went into Italy as far as Pisa, but that was only sightseeing as in a show. That autumn she was in Sweden and Denmark, brought thither by an international meeting of the Young Men's Christian Association, to which her father was a delegate. She enjoyed everything she saw—the towns, the people, the sea, the sky, above all, the sunsets. She just records them in her diaries, but when we went over part of the same ground the year before she died, she always wanted to be alone with me when the gorgeous colours of the

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setting sun came. Then she talked of this early visit, of those who were dead, and of those who were still to be born. Within a day or two of the beginning of the last year of her life we sat together near Copenhagen watching the sun go down. I remember well how sad and affectionate she was, and what little she said was about the last time she was there—when she was still a girl. Had it been revealed to her heart how near she was to the dark gates of death, the sorrow of decaying beauty could not have stilled her mind in a deeper or more solemn hush.

But in Sweden itself all was gaiety. "We had a nice balcony," she wrote, "and often were out on it watching the sunset skies. . . . There was also a full moon." Excessive piety and unrestrained hilarity went arm in arm. Nobles, Bishops, Generals attended religious meetings during the day, and feasts ruled in the afternoon and evening. "The less men understood each other, the more they smiled and embraced. It was most comic the way they all gushed at each other; every one felt so affectionate when all were united there for the same cause and with the same aims. One Swede excused himself for speaking to M. without

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introduction, as we all expected to meet in heaven and were making acquaintance on earth first. . . . The gentlemen were fond of sitting hand-in-hand."

This was a scene which remained in her memory. They had been liberally entertained on one of the excursions, and the time for leave-taking had come. I find the record in her diary: "Before we left, Mr. Schlumbach, a big German who had been an American cowboy, proposed a cordial vote of thanks to our host and hostess; we had prayers and addresses from a Swedish pastor, Mr. Barde (our Swiss friend), etc.; papa prayed in English; the students sang some songs, ending with an evening hymn in which one of them, a tall pastor, sang the tenor solo, the others joining in with a low accompaniment. By this time it was quite dark, and the large full moon was shining." The strains of hymns spread over the moonlit waters as they went home.

A flying excursion through Sweden followed. At the Falls of Trollhättan, "Mr. Williams [afterwards Sir George Williams, who had been travelling with the Gladstones] asked us to sing *Rock of Ages* as we sat watching the rushing waters." One more

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experience of this journey was often in her mind in later life. The travellers were caught in a storm off the coast of Norway. "Directly we got out of the shelter of the land we found a great storm raging. The wind had been getting up in just the opposite direction to what it was before, and so lashed the sea into fury. It was a splendid sight—the sea tossing and heaving, covered with a white foam, but of a beautiful clear green underneath the waves as they curled over; the air a mass of grey mist, driving rain and spray through which the rough rocky coast loomed with its grand irregular outline. . . . It was fearfully cold. The rain swept along in torrents, and every now and then a wave rushed over the deck and we had to hold on tight to ropes, mast, or whatever we could get, and did not dare to leave go in case a roll came and we were jerked overboard. The steamer was really not strong enough for such hard work, and it was a most anxious labour for the captain. He steered most carefully, going very slowly, and shouting down for the engines to be eased at each specially high wave that he saw coming. . . . We all gazed very anxiously at the point of Ekersund, which seemed hardly to get any nearer, and were

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hopefully informed from time to time that we should be there in half an hour. At last we got there and entered calmer water, much to every one's relief, for every one was either fearfully ill or very anxious. One of the gentlemen rushed up to the station directly we landed and was just in time to stop the train, which had determined not to wait any longer. . . . We were soaked through —at least, I was, and the others more or less so—but had to pack into a carriage for about three hours (I think) and take a journey through very bleak, wild country, chiefly flat moorland with cold grey lakes here and there."

The summer holiday of 1889 was spent in Bavaria, Paris having been taken in the way and its exhibition devoured with relish. Again, in later times, we went this way together, and to her there were no intervening years. Her morning walks alone, her innocent delight in mountain, wood, and waterfall, came back from their well-kept retreats in her memory. She remembered the books she was then reading, having associated them with the places, and she quoted the poetry that had pleased her then. Augsburg, Munich, Salzburg, Innsbruck, were also visited and revelled in.

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Long walks were taken, and glimpses of the roads are lying in the diaries—Altanssee looking "very peaceful and beautiful in the afternoon sunlight," the large fashionable hotels where "our walking costumes felt rather out of place"; the warm day they walked for five or six hours into Ischl through dark shady pine-trees, and when from what seemed bowers of magical coolness and shade they looked out into a hot world in glaring sunshine, "the snowy Dachstein in the distance"; the sunrise and sunset glows on the Dolomites; the falling of snow on a summer day at Oberbotzen; the marvels of the Brenner railway; the jodeling of the peasants on the High Alps and the long lingering echoing of the notes in the valleys.

She and one of her sisters were left alone at Bischofshofen to end the holiday, and again days were spent which went to quicken every susceptibility of her soul. The freedom, the ramblings in pine-woods, the scrambles up the mountains, the lazing on the lake, the early morning walks when dewy freshness was around, and the late evening strolls when sleepy night was creeping upon the earth, awoke within her that yearning music of the soul which subdues all passions

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and desires and compels them to listen wistfully.

One experience of this holiday remained as a lively recollection. She and her sister with two guides walked from Pfandelscharte to Heiligenblut over the Gross Glockner. She was in a new and romantic world. The early morning start in mist, the breakfast in "a sort of cave under dripping rocks," a glimpse of chamois, the steadily growing power of the sun, the first crossing of a glacier, "Peter's enormous hand" helping her over, were rare delights. "When we got to the top of the pass, we had a glorious view, for the sun had come out, and the snow-peaks and masses of rock stood up all round us—the Gross Glockner himself shining out in the most regal way." The night was spent at the Glockner Haus, a building belonging to the Alpine Club. I quote the diary, because though the entry is but formal in its expression it does hold some indication of the emotional changes which were being produced in her by contact with the vastness and the majestic beauty of nature:

"That evening we went upstairs early, after last arrangements with Ries and last

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orders for fresh nails in our boots; we both tucked up our skirts first, that they might be as much out of the way as possible, and then went to bed about seven o'clock. We were to be called about one o'clock, and so got up when we heard Ries' summons, but we really had had our coffee and left the house by five minutes to one, and on inquiry Ries confessed in the coolest way that he had not been able to sleep, and so woke us earlier; about a quarter to twelve really. However, we did not mind starting so early, for we walked steadily and got right up on the snow before the sun rose. The first hours of our expedition were most weird and fascinating; there was a nearly full moon, and it was so clear that we needed no lantern. First we crossed a small bit of glacier and then worked round to the further side of the mountain, and along the Leiterthal; we were high up on one side of the valley, walking along a narrow stony path, with the gorge deep in shadow below us, the snow peaks round taking queer lights and shades in the moonlight, and all the sky overhead spangled with stars; the night was fresh, but not too cold, and we walked along at an even, comfortable pace, Ries

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in front and Peter bringing up the rear. We had some nice narrow bits with great dark precipices beneath us, and the paths were in parts narrow and slippery, so we had to look carefully where we were going. Peter was at first very dutiful in offering his hand over difficult places, but got gradually less so as he saw I was accustomed to them. When we got on the snow, it was hard and firm, but we walked over a good deal before we got to any steep slopes.

"At last we got to a long steep piece, and the ropes were fetched out, and one fastened round each of us, about the waist. Ries took the other end of Bessie's and Peter of mine, and we started off, after sustaining ourselves with a bit of chocolate each. We had neither of us been roped before, so one of our ambitions was fulfilled; indeed several ambitions were fulfilled that day. The snow was so hard that it was difficult sometimes to get a firm footing, even though I followed carefully in Peter's large steps, but whenever one made the least slip, the rope tightened, for it was quite ready to support one if a tumble came (they were such long, smooth slopes that one might have rolled right down them). . . . I felt remarkably lively all



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the way, and was never once uncomfortably out of breath or tired. The sunrise was a most glorious sight; the faint golden colour appearing in the east and gradually getting clearer and brighter, and overspreading the whole sky; while the mountain tops were lit by it, and took lovely red and purple and golden tints; then, as we came round a corner, we looked back and saw the blazing sun, which had before been hidden by a near rocky peak. After that it grew gradually warmer, but was never at all baking hot, for we were so high up. We stopped some time at the Johannshutte, 11,360 feet, where we had some hot tea warmed up at the stove. We found there a young Austrian gentleman whom we had seen at the Glockner Haus, but who had come up by the more difficult Hofmannsweg, on the other side, and so arrived about an hour before us; he and his guide soon went on up to the top, and we followed, being first carefully prepared with dark spectacles, warm woollen gloves, and I with a woollen cap under my hat and a woollen handkerchief round my neck, which were pressed upon me by the old caretaker of the hut, who said it would be very cold up there. And so it was for

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there was a strong wind blowing over the snow, and I felt very glad of my wraps as we were toiling carefully over the long, white expanse. There are two peaks at the very top—the Klein and Gross Glockner, and between the two is a narrow ridge of rock. Before we got to that we had all to stick our stocks in the snow and leave them, while we trusted to our own hands for any extra help. There are iron ropes and pegs fixed in the rock in several places near the top, for one to hold on to, and we had to climb up very steep bits, clinging on as we best could. The guides and Bessie had all got spikes on their boots by this time; they were most awful looking implements; at starting, when they were hanging over the men's backs, I thought they were a sort of grappling-irons to catch into the rock and hold a rope in case of accident, but I soon found that they were for fastening on boots, four great iron spikes, about an inch and a half long, for each foot. Peter said I did not need them for coming up, so I stuck my feet as firmly as I could in all the little corners and ledges which he himself used, and got on very easily. We did not go right up and down the Klein Glockner, but got

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round the back of it, and then descended a little way by some steps cut in the snow, where I had to put one hand on Peter's collar and the other on the iron rope.

"When we got to the beginning of the last peak, we met the young Austrian, who was waiting at a place where it was possible to pass him. I had no idea how we were to come down this part; I thought it would be such slow work for the guide to go down first and then help one down, so I watched the Austrian to see how he did it. I was much amused to see his guide just point down and the young man obediently disappeared over a precipice, while the guide stood at the top and held the rope on which the young man was apparently dangling. I had never thought of this way of doing it, but of course it is much the quickest and safest, for the guide can direct and keep you firm from above. A little more scrambling up with the rock sloping sheer away at each side, the ledge being only about one and a half feet wide, then another snow slope almost as steep as the wall of a house, and we were at the top, the very highest point of a real snow mountain! There was a thick cake of snow on the peak at that time,

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and the guides spread out our mackintoshes for us to sit down, warning me when I was going to sit rather high up that the snow might break away under me and over I should go, the peak was so small. To our left as we sat was a conical wooden erection which we had seen, and thought a remarkably pointed rock, through the telescope at the Glockner Haus. Just below me to the right was a large iron cross, brought up in bits and erected there in honour of the Emperor and Empress some years ago. There was a crucifix below it, which looked strange to an English eye. Behind the cross was a little box in which the names of those who ascended were put. Peter produced one of his cards, and we wrote our names and Ries' with the date, and put it in the box for further consideration by the eagles or any one else that cared to look. Our guides were very excited at having got us to the top, and at its being such a splendid day. Peter had been up six times before that summer, but had never had it so clear; there was no mist, and only a few minute clouds in the far distance. Our view was glorious; ranges and ranges of peaks, many of our old friends, the Watzmann of Berchtesgaden,

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the Schmittenhöhe behind, Zell-am-See, etc., among them, and in the near foreground masses of snow blazing white in the sun, the great glaciers going down into the valleys, and black rocks jutting up through the snow. We had to tear ourselves away, however, and track down—Bessie in front, dangled by Ries, and I behind, suspended on the end of the powerful Peter's rope. I had an advantage in being behind, for I saw Bessie in front and so got an idea of what I must look like; it was sometimes easier to be behind when we got to a difficult bit, but sometimes it was worse, for those in front made such enormous holes in the snow and broke it away so.

"When we came down, the sun had been at work blazing away, and the snow was very soft. Over the slopes we went plunging in often over our knees, and sometimes so deeply that we could not keep upright. It was great fun picking the way down the narrow ledge between the peaks, with Peter watching so carefully and gradually letting the rope out as I got further down. He was really a splendid guide, always ready to help at the right time, but not at all over-anxious, and so watchful to see what one could do and

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what not; Ries was really not quite so skilful, though he was extremely good. Peter's encouraging 'So,' lengthened out to any extent, was very amusing, and we kept up a little conversation now and then. When we were going over the long slopes of snow, I felt like a pet pug-dog out for an airing, trotting on in front of the longsuffering manservant, or else like a pig going to market dragging its owner behind it. When we got back to the hut, we found two gentlemen and their guides who had come up from the other side, just starting for the top, and the young Austrian just leaving to continue his descent.

"A new interest had arrived in the shape of a very strong-minded and strong-bodied woman, who came up, we found, to change places with the little old caretaker of the hut who had pressed the mufflers upon me. The woman gave us and the guides some herb soup, and the four kept up a lively conversation, getting very jovial and excited over it; Peter's way appeared to be to keep silence himself unless he was quite sure of his words, but to listen attentively and laugh at every possibility of a joke. He looked like an immense good-humoured giant sitting there and supping his soup,

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with such a twinkle in his innocent blue eyes and such a grin on his 'counting-house.' We had to write in the visitors' book—they seemed to keep two in the hut; and then we started for the rest of the descent.

"More snow, softer than ever. I, too, had spikes for coming down, and felt very funny in them. I must have looked a most ridiculous object before I took off some of my extra wraps at the hut with a Tyrolese straw hat on the top of a grey woollen cap that covered all my hair and ears, then dark goggles and blue veil; body and skirt of different dresses; jacket with handkerchief round my neck and a great comforter over that; skirt, already tacked up very high, arranged by Peter, who tied a cord about halfway down my legs and pulled the skirt up through it—very convenient, but hardly elegant; boots tightly laced up and strongly nailed, with these great spikes strapped round them; and stockings in one of which the said spikes had made great gashes before I quite got into the way of manipulating them; also enormous woollen paws over my kid ones. . . . Gradually we left all the snow behind us, and got on to the rocks

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again. We went into the Leiterhutte just to see it, but it is hardly ever used now. It was getting hot by this time, but I did not feel the sun too warm, though I expected to; it was really a perfect day as far as comfort went, or as perfect as one would like it to be on such an ascent. Plenty of little streams supplied us with water on the way down, Peter generally giving me out of his glass, and Ries looking to Bessie. They stuck to their respective charges all the time, and when we got into the region of grass and flowers, and Peter told me I could get some edelweiss, Bessie did not trouble to scramble after it, so Ries stayed in the path with her while Peter took me up among scattered rocks where the little plants were growing, and helped me pick some nice flowers. My very first one was very small and screwy, but I found it myself along our path before Peter showed me these better ones. Thus was a great ambition satisfied! Further along, Peter saw some flowers below us, and bounded down a precipitous slope as if he were a frisky goat instead of a heavy man, to get them for me; he was not tired, not he! Nor was I; I felt as fresh as anything, except that my wretched right

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foot didn't like coming downhill, and I cockered it up as usual and went carefully.

"We did not take Peter all the way down to Heiligenblut, for one man was enough to carry our things, and show us the way, so we had an affecting parting. By a tumble-down wall, with inquisitive calves around us, and the sun looking down from heaven, the book of reference was produced," and the first guide went his way. "We got to the inn at Heiligenblut about ten minutes to five, so we had been just about sixteen hours on our expedition. There Ries left us, after we had written his praises in his book and bidden tender farewells."

The summer of 1891 was spent in Wales, where she roamed in the region of St. Davids. She enjoyed the wind and the wildness, and went out for long walks before breakfast. "Uncle and I had a jolly battle with the wind and driving mist in the morning." Here again we went together later on, in pursuance of her wish to return to the places where she was happy in her young free days. She brought me over her old walks and talked much of the first visit, and was very beaming. The years had brought no regrets.

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I have lingered amongst these holiday rambles because without them she cannot be understood. It was from them that she got much of her inspiration and calm steadfastness. She was fond of walking; she would never take to a bicycle for that reason. Twenty miles a day were easy for her. Going on day after day from resting-place to resting-place, passing from hill to valley, and from moor to wood, her soul became the dwelling-place of the spaciousness, the liberty, the joy of nature. She herself was like an expansive countryside of mountain peaks glistening in the sun, rich valleys heavy with a silent and shadowed sweetness, slopes leading both the feet and the mind up to where the thoughts of earth mingle with the freedom of heaven; solemn woodlands into whose cool shades the brightness of a cloudless sky penetrates. She got from the great mother herself her sense of the beauty and joy of life, and that gift from that hand carries with it also a sense of life's importance and of life's equality. For, immanent in nature are death and suffering, and one walks in their companionship with a helping hand ever outstretched, and an affectionate heart ever beating.

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## *Chapter III*

# FAITH

THE home in Pembridge Square breathed religion, and it gave her an inheritance of spiritual rectitude and sincerity which was duly enriched by her own experiences. Its traditions, its activities, its connections, were religious—Nonconformist in all their modes of expression and yet unbound by sectarianism of any kind. It was a religion of prayer and praise, of faith mingled with works, of charity both in thought and in deed, of humility both in heart and in aspect. Her life begins from this source. She is a strenuous little believer, attentive to the forms of faith and devoted. Her Sundays are spent in quiet reading and in studying the Scriptures, and she attends church regularly. She takes up various schemes of Sunday study from religious magazines, and dutifully records in her diaries how she wrestled with the Scripture questions. For instance, turning to the second of her diaries,



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under heading of January 18, 1884, she records: "Answers to Scripture questions; Mr. Symes; read *Mother Herring's Chickens*; dinner; Scripture questions; class; chestnuts; tea; *Mother Herring's Chickens*; Scripture." The family were responsible for a mission carried on in Latymer Road, Notting Hill, and there, whilst helping at the soup-kitchen and entertainments, she received some of her earliest lessons in practical Christianity and in the life of the poor.

She wrote sermons during these years, and put into writing criticisms of books she was reading from the fervid Christian point of view. It is interesting to note that her comment on Newman's *Apologia pro Vita sua* was: "This book was to me almost like a strange tongue; it seemed to have so little in it to which a chord in me responded. I honour the man immensely." On the other hand, Bishop Butler was after her own heart, and amongst her papers is an essay written in 1888 on *The Coincidence or otherwise of Virtue and Happiness* in the spirit of the master. "Is it true happiness," she asked, "to pass as easily as possible through the world, looking out for pleasure, but not for the distinctions between right

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and wrong?" In such germinating thoughts one sees the promise of her whole life.

In 1887–88 faith was specially dear to her. Religion had become a dramatic reality, and certain personal reasons had made her attach herself specially to St. Mary Abbot's, Kensington. There she was baptized on May 29, 1887, but her diary states that she worshipped that morning at Westbourne Park Chapel, where Dr. Clifford preached. "On the Sunday, which was Whit Sunday, I went with papa to Dr. Clifford's in the morning. In the afternoon F. broke up her class a few minutes early, and she and I went off to the parish church. . . . Mr. Glyn read the service so impressively and kindly and each of us stepped up in turn to be sprinkled and signed with the water. At the close of the service Mr. Glyn told us two mottoes that he wanted to give us: 'Let your garments be always white' (Ecclesiastes ix. 8); and 'They shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy' (Rev. iii. 4)." Later, there is an interpolated note in the diary: "I forgot to say that after Mr. Glyn had given us these mottoes he gave each of us one of the pure white eucharist lilies off the font as a remembrance of the service, and said he

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would like us to keep them always. I had mine in water in our bedroom for some days, and when it began to fade I pressed it." And when she had gone, and I had to look through the pathetic little treasures which she had kept sacred from destruction, I found it, dead, brown, without fragrance, a sorry emblem of the purity that decays. It bloomed in her heart.

A spiritual tranquillity for a time settled upon her, and she even came dangerously near to that useless life of pottering about in ecclesiastic matters, from decorating churches on holy days to dispensing charity to "the poor," as a superior person.

"On July 3rd," she wrote in her diary in 1888, "F. and I went to Donald Fraser's Presbyterian Church, and stayed to Holy Communion; it was my first time; the first time in the Church of England was at Smallthorne Church, September 4th. I keep a list of the times that I attend the Communion Service as I think it is good to look over it and remember my feelings and thoughts. It will help, I hope, to impress it more upon me and make me careful to see whether I really am progressing and getting to love our Lord more and feel His love to me and others more each

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time." For some years she attended once a week regularly and often more frequently. I now have that list in front of me. It is on the left-hand pages of a notebook; on the right are notes expository of the dogmas of the Christian faith. She could then put her creeds into a few well-trimmed sentences.

Her activities took the form of devotion and charity. She attended classes on Scriptural exegesis, and began to teach others herself. "I went to some of Principal Wace's lectures on St. Matthew's Gospel until my servant-girls' class at the Nassau Senior Training Home took up that time. I go to the Home every Thursday afternoon for two hours and give the girls there reading, writing, drawing, or other instruction and amusement." She went out sketching regularly every morning early for some time, and frequently finished with eight o'clock matins at St. Mary Abbot's. On Easter Sunday 1889 she took her first Sunday-school class at Latymer Road Mission; a month later she became a teacher at the boys' Sunday-school at St. Mary Abbot's.

From the enervation of the worship of the rich and the fashionable she was saved

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by several circumstances, and one of these was undoubtedly the influence of the Salvation Army. Her father's younger brother, George Gladstone, a man possessed in an unusual degree of a spirit of quiet cheeriness, and his wife, a breezy personality of great "go" and happy commonsense, were devoted to the Salvation Army, and their niece was devoted to them. She often visited them. In their home at Hove, freed from the restraints of convention, away from formalism, feeling the saving grace of equality, she spent many odd holidays. Salvation Army officers constantly came and went, and she got to know and admire them. She went to worship with them, and she wrote: "The meetings are very interesting, and give one an insight into a different aspect of love and worship of God to one's own; there is of course a good deal of repetition and sameness, but judging the tree by its fruits, the Army has done an immense amount of good, and its soldiers, as far as I have seen them, are full of holy zeal and steadfastness." Up to the end she helped the Army's good works liberally, but in the main anonymously.

Meanwhile, she was reading. In 1886, in



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addition to the ordinary reading of an educated girl of sixteen, she was studying Stanley's *Jewish Church*, Froude's *Studies*, the *Memoirs of Caroline Fox*, Carlyle's *French Revolution*, Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, Edna Lyall's religious novels. Ephemeral political literature, in pamphlets and magazines, appear in the lists of the following year; *Darwin's Life and Letters* (in which she was intensely interested), Baldwin Brown's *The Higher Life*, Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, *The Excursion*, *Aurora Leigh*, and, above all, the *Life of Charles Kingsley* come next year; in 1889 Emerson appears, and with him Robertson's *Sermons*, Lecky's *European Morals*, and, towards the end of the year, Tolstoi and Martineau. Her courses of reading were systematically planned morning and evening—for she then rose very early as she always enjoyed the freshness of the morning—and their character became more definite and less miscellaneous. They were light for the strenuous striving spirit seeking peace, exploring the ways of life for a place where it could dwell and find the work and thoughts which would satisfy it. Carlyle's works, *The Life of F. D. Maurice*, Ruskin's *Modern Painters*,

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*Looking Backward, Essays in Socialism* are in the list of 1890; next year she read several of Maurice's books, Mill's *Liberty* and *Autobiography*, George Macdonald's novels, and a good deal of Wordsworth.

A little later on she looked back and picked from what she had read the books that had influenced her—"my special favourites—*Kingsley's Life and Letters*, and several of Browning's poems. . . . Of story-books, the one I have liked best is *Robert Elsmere*, though it gave me a good deal of pain at the end. That 'new religion' is so unsatisfying." Of *Darwin's Life and Letters* she wrote: "This book interested and impressed me very much, and I think I got a great deal of good from it. . . . His patience and unwearying study of details, even when in great pain and weakness, enabled him to get through a vast amount of work . . . but no amount of work could have enabled him to do what he did unless accompanied with a love of truth for its own sake, and a determination to crush mistaken and false notions in himself and others firmly but gently."

Her morning was over. She was being called to go out to her labours. Still, there was to be a lengthy preparation. A

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haunting unhappiness regarding her own worthiness was creeping upon her. She was not so good as she might be; the world was too close to her; her servitude was being broken by waywardness. She was in a mist, clinging fast to the Perfect but unable to see what was close around her. The noise of the unseen conflict was in her ears, a foreboding that she was to go into it and be of it was in her heart. She welcomed it and yet she was troubled by uncertainties. Her journal tells of her wrestling, of the light in her heart and the darkness at her feet.

In the spring of 1891 she tried to write an essay on *The Symmetry of Life.* "As usual, I found much that expressed what I wanted in Robert Browning and his wife." True harmony is "not necessarily from joy or sorrow, but rather is made up of all experience working together for the perfecting of life." She gave up trying to write the essay, however. She could not do it; her vision was not yet clear enough. On the first day of that year she wrote: "We went to the midnight service of St. Mary Abbot's; the church was crowded; Mr. Glyn spoke, and there was silence whilst twelve o'clock

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struck. Oh, how I need a deeper spiritual life, not fresh resolutions so much as strength and enthusiasm to persevere, conscientiously and cheerfully." How fully was her prayer to be answered—how fully! But she had discovered the path and her feet were upon it.

The good fairies which in the nursery stories guide the favoured ones to make the right choice, however unfortunate they may seem at first, had come one after another to be with her. Hills and valleys; the joy of free nature and the sympathy of struggling London; religious inspiration and human example, had whispered their magic spells in her ear, and were starting her upon that quest for the ideal which is the only sure earnest that the Spirit of the Lord still moves amongst His people, leading them upwards. And like the last and most potent of all the spells the spirit of Elizabeth and Robert Browning spoke to her. They taught her the pilgrim knowledge of faith and resignation, of belief which does not stumble in the thickest darkness.

Long afterwards, when much of the hard way of life was behind her, and she had travailed and been bruised, when death

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shadowed her feet and she had to bid adieu to friends, she turned back to the time when the diary now open before me was written, and murmured the lines which she here quotes, writing on January 26, 1890: "Bessie and I stayed to the Holy Communion afterwards. For various reasons I thought perhaps the past week had been one of the most interesting of my life—very quiet outwardly, certainly, but with, I think and hope, a good deal of teaching in it: the words which Teenie pointed out to me in Mrs. Browning's *A Vision of Poets*, 'Knowledge by suffering entereth, and Life is perfected by Death,' have struck me very deeply.'

In the autumn of 1910 she wrote to Mrs. Middleton, who was then in the companionship of death: "I have always been meaning to ask whether you knew that poem [*A Vision of Poets*]. It has been a great help to me since I was a little girl and it fixed itself upon Teenie Mackenzie (then my most intimate friend) and myself. I suppose girls like sad things sometimes, and in this there is such a note of triumph running all through the sadness and suffering: 'Knowledge by suffering entereth, and Life is perfected by Death.' I had not had much

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experience of the sad side of life when I first liked the poem."

The glooms around and beyond always encompassed her. But to her they were filled with voices like a cathedral chant. When she was young, the voices, if thin, were clear; as the years went, they became richer, but more indistinct. Her religion ripened with her life. Her development was one of inward strengthening. And the awe in which she lived became more solemn as the years went. If she was solemn, she was never sombre. She was indeed the sunniest of optimists, but she always joined trembling with her mirth. Every Sunday when we returned from the country she liked to sing hymns with her children, and then she always chose, amongst the others, one of death and departure, and one reminding them of friends away in other lands. Often they sang the hymn which we sang at Golders Green:

> Calmly, calmly, lay her down,
> She hath fought a noble fight,
> She hath battled for the right,
> She hath won the unfading crown.

Her idea was that we should be happy in the shadows. The joy and cheeriness which depended upon sunshine were like

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the seeds sown on stony ground, soon to be parched and withered up. The songs she sang drew their melody from the whole of the keyboard of life, and not from either the higher or the lower octaves alone.

The final form of her religion was a simple purity of spirit and trust in God. Like everybody who really feels religion she was greatly perturbed by the preaching of eternal damnation, and whilst still teaching in the St. Mary Abbot's Sunday-school she discussed "Universalism" with one of the curates there. She desired to give the boys some notion of the great forgiveness of God and His overpowering mercy, but was forbidden, and she was loyal. When at last she resigned, she wrote to the curate-in-charge: "You will not misunderstand me, please, will you, and think that I care less about religion, or that I think it any less good to teach the boys religious principles than I used to?" She had moved into a softer religious atmosphere, into richer fields of religious life. "The perfection of the human soul consists in serving Christ daily; the assuming of religion at intervals contradicts its essential idea." She was repelled by the great preparations for worship—the dressing in special clothes, the formalities, the

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gathering of all and sundry. From the form she went to the spirit, from the proclamation she went to the life. One who was a friend of her family expressed surprise that on a certain solemn occasion we employed Christian rites. She heard of it and it gave her great pain. "I never really doubt the efficacy of Christianity," she said, "except when I hear such views. Will these Christians never understand Christ?" "He always prays," says Theophylact, "who does good works, nor does he neglect prayer but when he leaves off being just."

Her life was one act of Christian worship which grew into a final grandeur only after she had left the paths of individualist religion and stood upon those of the great atonement of humanity through Socialism. "My Socialism grows entirely out of my religion and though that may not prevent me making many big mistakes still I cannot do more than ask God to direct me in what I do and think," is one of the latest entries in her journal. The awe of the Eternal was never out of her mind, the love of Christ guided every step she took, her work was one continued sacrifice, one continued prayer. She saw spirit in everything. The whole of creation was a moral effort

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striving and dreaming towards a perfect beauty and a perfect love. Her soul was the world's soul. She knew the destiny of the world from what she herself aspired to reach. The woods and fields changing their beauty with the seasons—but always beautiful, whether drenched with rain, clad with snow, or glistening in the sun; London with its confusions of peace and noise, quiet and bustle, indulgence and sacrifice, luxury and poverty; Lossiemouth, with its sea now tempestuous, now calm, its expanse of sky and dark sparkling nights, its seafaring hardships and holiday delights; men and women with their joys and sorrows, their encouragements and their hopes deferred, their strengths and their weaknesses; Magdalene, Rachel, Mary, each with her offering and her worship,—all touched her soul and charmed it into music. She did not merely meet them at her threshold, she bade them welcome to her innermost sanctuaries and communed there with them and got from each its appropriate message from the Eternal.

There was no dualism in her world—the life of the flesh with one set of acceptable rules and the life of the spirit with another set. "God and Christ are above and be-

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yond all churches and chapels," she wrote to a working-class girl of Leicester, who sent her a letter asking what she should do in view of the fact that an employer who had cheated her and had just victimised her was an important member of the place of worship which she attended. This firm grip on the spiritual reality of things kept her vision and her mind clear when those of her friends were darkened and confused by the intricacies of circumstance and conduct. From that came her courage and her hope infinite. She knew no difficulty that could not be unlocked by reference to what was moral right. On the other hand it taught her a stoical moral optimism. God is in His heaven and it must in the end be all right with the world. Men had to purify themselves and then act. That would be sure to be right—as right as possible at present and productive of more perfect right in the future.

In this faith she wrote to friends: "One cannot do anything more than try to do right." This is why it was true of her as an old friend wrote of her: "Caring little for praise or applause so long as she did her utmost for the cause which she had at heart." She could work on in good heart

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whether people approved or not, whether supported by majorities or not. In the hour of Conservative triumph in 1900 she wrote to a Conservative friend: "I am afraid it will be another losing fight for us in Leicester, but it does not do to mind that, if you care about what you are fighting for and try to fight straightforwardly." She really cared for nothing but the life of the spirit. The sources of joy were very far removed from the surface of things for her. They were in the inner recesses and not subject to sudden changes of weather like a brawling mountain torrent. To some extent this belief that God was in all creation made her a little self-centred. She was like one who sits at a warm fireside in the wintertime heedless of storms and tempests outside. She did what her own heart asked her to do. She liked to quote: "I must be filled with joy if my feet are on the right road and my face set towards 'the gate that is called Beautiful,' though I may fall many times in the mire and often in the mist go astray."

As I have said, she was not at home in an ordinary congregation. It distracted her. It was not a spiritual union of believers. She worshipped, when that act was

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specialised from her every thought and deed, with her own family at her own fireside. But still she always felt the yearning for social worship, and she sometimes talked of getting a few friends together regularly for this purpose. But her hands were full, the world called for much labour, and the days were few and short. Her desire remained unfulfilled. At Lossiemouth, however, she enjoyed a communion in worship which she never missed. The simple Presbyterian services unsullied by gaudy display and conscious effort soothed her and led her in spirit far along the road of her pilgrimage. She knew some of her neighbours and the fisherfolk very intimately. She respected them and their lives, and being in church with them pleased her. Otherwise, she contented herself, as she once said, by feeling that she was never out of church—she might indeed have said: never away from the Communion table. Miss Stephens' *Quaker Strongholds* was a comfort to her, and she liked an expression I once used —"a Presbyterian Quaker." She seemed always to have a particular regard for our Quaker friends as though they shared some special secret of the soul with her.

Her sense of the spiritual in religion being

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so keen she naturally placed supreme importance on religious education. She therefore opposed with stern determination the clamour mistakenly made in the name of religion, that the Bible should be made a text-book, like a history or a grammar, in schools. That any body of Christians should call that "religious" education was to her nothing but an appalling proof of how low Christian life had ebbed in this country. It was a destruction of the family in its most vital part combined with a destruction of religion in its most spiritual part. She was in the Ladies' Gallery of the House of Commons one day when I was trying to express that view, and when I had finished, she came down and beamed on me. "They cannot get over that argument of yours," she said. "We of the 'secular solution' value the Bible; I don't think the others do—in quite the same way."

And her faith stood the test to the end. When she knew that she was close by the opening gateway of death, I asked her if she desired to see any one who would speak to her of what was to come. "That would be but a waste of time," she replied, "I have always been ready. Let us praise God together for what has been. He has been

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very good to me in giving me my work, my friends, and my faith. At the end of the day I go gladly to Him for rest and shelter." She was convinced that life and time were not the sum and substance of experience, and went away as though but starting upon a journey which, beginning in darkness, would proceed through light. She would hold my hand, she said, till those who had gone before gave her greetings.

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## *Chapter IV*

# PREPARATION

THE last entry in a book of extracts kept by her mother was "to be strong and beautiful and go round making music all the time," and that yearning was surely the inheritance of the little life then about to come into the world. It believed in nothing which it did not desire to put into practice; it had no Utopia which it did not strive to realise; for it, indeed, there was no "hardest for earth too hard." Its mission was to create things from thoughts, realities from ideals, and thus it came into conflict with the world.

As I have said, on the third Sunday in May 1889, my wife became a teacher in the Sunday-school at St. Mary Abbot's, and this led a little later on to her giving one evening a week to a boys' club run in connection with this church. Thus began her work in life. The boys were unruly; she bemoans that her discipline was bad,



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but she had an affectionate regard for her scholars. They sometimes walked home with her, sometimes they had tea with her; they talked to her about their work, their families, their friends. She visited them and got to know their people. "My best time, however, is when I meet them sometimes in the street. I often see them running errands, leaving papers, etc., or walk up from Sunday-school with them. Then, of course I hear about them from their mothers. I enjoy visiting their homes very much, the women all seem to me to be so kindly, and often so unselfish in devoting themselves entirely to their children." At Christmas-time she wrote: "I have been round to several of the boys and met others in the street; some of them have to work all Christmas Day, poor things. I am so glad I have boys, and I only hope I may do them as much good as I know they do me; I always feel better for seeing them." One of her co-workers has written of her as she was then: "The more trouble a boy gave, the more hopeless he was considered by other teachers, the more she was attracted to him. She took a real and lively interest in the work, and when there was anything extra to be done in the way of writing out



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lists, etc., she was always ready to relieve one of it and always brought it back up to time."

The boys brought her to reality. She asked that reality for her faith. She began by finding it in Maurice and Kingsley. Her imagination, fresh and innocent, was then drawn to the ritual of the Church; she saw saints and heroes in those who ministered there, and for a time that satisfied her. Then the world revealed itself to her, and it seemed to be calling to the Church for help and healing, and the Church was responding but poorly. She was amazed and confused, as one suddenly born into a new world of strange habits with a vivid recollection of the old. More and more closely did she cling to her faith whilst she felt the drift beneath her sway her from her ecclesiastical associations. Her saints and heroes became earthy.

A sermon by the Archbishop of York emphasising that the test of religion is love for one's neighbours fills her with delight; a sermon on the third anniversary of her baptism by the vicar of St. Mary Abbot's, in which "he laid stress on the impossibility of doing without first being," is noted with ardent enthusiasm a few days after-

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wards. That is immediately followed by some reflections on humility being absent from a sermon she heard in a certain fashionable Unitarian church of the time. Then, she makes an approving note of some words of Dr. Parker: "He spoke against men who met together in a nice room to discuss how to do something for the suffering masses; if you want to reach them—go to them yourself." "I feel no doubt of religion," she wrote on the threshold of 1891, and she immediately hurried to reflect that it was life essentially: "There is a tremendous difference between admiring and believing in Christianity on the one hand, and on the other putting ourselves under the Divine influence hour by hour." She was discovering the old problem of how to be what one believed, and she was just the person to solve it with almost a ruthless rectitude. She had come to the briar patches already.

Her time of unconcern lasted up till 1889–90; from 1890 to 1894–95 she was searching for light as to what she should do; in 1895 the clouds lifted and the way ahead became clear.

Her Sunday-school focused her difficulties. There she met all her problems face

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to face. When she was changing her class at the end of 1890 she wrote: "I feel very sorry about losing my present boys. I know I owe a great deal to them." The fact was, her Sunday-school experience was revealing to her the difficulties of the world. It was the House of the Interpreter to her. At first she blamed herself. She could not discipline the boys; she did not discipline herself by sufficient preparation. In reality the difficulty was much deeper seated. The ferment of social duty was troubling her heart. She does not face it at first; she hastens to find and give other explanations; she is vociferous in repeating old professions; she rushes into old activities. "I resolve from this time forth," she puts down in her diary on December 17, 1892, "so help me GOD, to pray regularly night and morning. I have gone through a good many changes of feeling since I last wrote [there had been no entry for nine months]; through all I trust GOD's hand has been leading me, though I am so wayward and weak. Do help me, GOD, to be more thorough in my thoughts and words and deeds, more thoroughly religious, and give me strength and determination to fight against laziness." With the New Year she

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appeals: "GOD make me know Thy Will and give me strength and wisdom, and above all Thy Holy Spirit, that I may be led by it wherever it takes me."

The revelations made in these pages are those of the martyr spirit. There is no doubt as to belief; the trouble is belief in action. Happy buoyancy has gone; fate shadowed by trials is with her; she finds it not a little hard to submit; she seems to flutter a little, but does not hesitate—she only lingers; it is cruel to bid the past adieu, and the future is full of strange portents like one of the darker journeys in the *Pilgrim's Progress*. But to the impelling fates she offers no resistance and no remonstrance. Only, it is a pitiful face she turns to them as she tells them she is ready to be led by them.

During this time of stressful change and acceptance of the yoke of life, she notes an interview she had with a Jewish girl who was living in the East End of London. "She is very Democratic and Socialistic and Bohemian, so we get on well together. But she has no religious belief; she would call herself an Atheist, but does not talk about it one way or the other generally. . . . She thinks that religious faith makes people

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much happier and admires those who have it; she likes the religious Socialists better than the others, but she does not care about it for herself. . . . She believes the future life is a sort of conservation of energy in a universal Pantheism. . . . She hates, as I do, all the ideas about future punishment of poor unbaptized people. She has a Christian friend of whom she is very fond, who is very ill and has nothing in life but her religion, and who falls and weeps upon ——'s neck because she so admires her work, and is so sad that such a good person should be condemned to eternal punishment. I should imagine, if Christ's teaching is true, or if there is anything divine in our moral sense and in human love and self-sacrifice, that ——'s life is more acceptable to GOD than that of the majority of orthodox religious people of whatever sect. Only I think if she believed in GOD she would take more care of herself; she is rather weary of life, and does not trouble to take proper food and rest."

A crisis came. She thought she would become a doctor. But the long entry in her journal on June 13, 1893, which surveys the year that had gone past, had better be quoted in full: "Sudden inspiration to

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write again in my journal caused by my going upstairs to look for something quite different, and coming across the first volume. The 'me' of that time seems such a different person from the 'me' of this time—a good deal nicer and more conscientious, but rather painfully self-satisfied and apt to think everything that happened to herself of great importance. Now, I do not feel interested in anything sufficiently to write long descriptions of it as I did in those days; I think every day I get lazier and less inclined to exertion, and yet at the same time there is the restless feeling and the desire to strike out into something special. I think some day soon I shall fall in love with somebody that no one approves of, including my own better self, and go to the bad! Now, isn't that a horrid way to talk of what should be, next to religion, the highest and best thing in a person's life? True it is, however, that the peace which succeeded the 'doctoring' is quite wearing off, and if I have energy, I expect I shall have some other hubbub in the autumn, as I had last year. Something of the feeling of this time last year has just returned, only it is much less intense. I suppose I was rather upset last June;

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June 2 was a sort of close of my happy-go-lucky way of going along, a sort of sudden shutting of a gate without any outward and visible sign; then a few days later it came worse, and I think those were the most wretched days I ever spent. . . . Then came the relief just by a friendly note. Well, anyhow, I have never been quite the same since. Never mind, I shall soon fall in love with that unsatisfactory man, and then I shall be most exceedingly unselfish and agreeable towards him!"

Upon full consideration the idea of becoming a doctor was rejected; but her father, finding her fixed in her desires to help others in some definite way, and fully approving of them, got her nominated as a manager of a group of schools in his area.

I have not written of her interests in public affairs hitherto, because I have thought it better to trace them in unbroken sequence, and this is now the time to do so, because the two streams of faith and political work converge to form the river of her life. In the earlier diaries and journals there is no trace of the opinions which guided her mature life. She refers to "the poor," like a little Lady Bountiful, and when she comes in contact with them,

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there is superior charity in her heart. But on October 23, 1887, she was at St. Mary Abbot's, where a curate preached, "denouncing, very justly, giving to beggars in the street, and encouraging idleness, etc. . . . He referred in his sermon to the meetings of the so-called 'unemployed,' or, as I have heard them called, 'unemployables,' or 'ill-employed.' Their gatherings have been very serious this week, hundreds or even thousands of them have assembled in Trafalgar Square, Hyde Park, the Embankment, etc.; but the police are all mustered and on the look-out, and successfully prevent the mob from doing mischief. They have, however, hurt a good many policemen, pulled up railings, etc., I believe; and they are spoiling the trade of the shops in those parts, for people do not care to go shopping with all those roughs about. This morning as Bessie and I were going to church we saw several good-for-nothing, low-looking men going towards the Park carrying their lunch, so I suppose they meant to spend the day at Socialistic demonstrations. . . . The mob consists almost entirely of idle loafers, and not of men who are willing to work steadily if they could only get employment."

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This is certainly anything but a promising beginning, and next day it is continued: "The gatherings of unemployed yesterday were pretty quiet and did not get any power over the police: they went to service at Westminster Abbey in the afternoon, but did not disturb it as much as might have been expected."

Within a month her perturbation is again expressed. On November 15 she wrote: "Last Sunday afternoon there was really bad fighting round Trafalgar Square, for the disorderly mob tried to disobey the proclamations that there were to be no processions in the streets round, nor meetings in, the Square. . . . The policemen have been having a bad time of it lately, for they have to stand both injuries and insults from the mobs, but they are universally praised for their steadiness and patience in carrying out their work."

The events to which these entries refer will be remembered by every one who was in London at the time. Little did she know, however, when she sat down and let her indignation and her contempt go that he who was to be the "unsatisfactory man" to whom she was to be "exceedingly unselfish and agreeable" was in the

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surging mass, the mob, which tried to preserve the right of public meeting in Trafalgar Square. Fate is always chuckling up its sleeve at us.

These troubles arose in connection with an agitation of the unemployed. Trade was very bad, and men out of employment were being told for the first time in their lives that "they ought not to starve in private." They were told to come out in their rags, and they came, the just with the unjust, and, as usual, those who looked on only saw the unjust. The industrial quarters opened their gates, and the streams converged on Trafalgar Square, where they met daily and listened to strange speeches. The meetings were dispersed on the demands of the West End interests. But for November 13 the Radical clubs called a great demonstration to assert the right of free speech and protest against the prison treatment meted out to William O'Brien. The meeting was prohibited by proclamation. Still, the crowds, the bands, and the banners came, and there was a weltering chaos in the Strand, in Parliament Street, in Northumberland Avenue, and round the Square. Mr. Cunninghame Graham and Mr. John Burns were arrested

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whilst leading their forces against the police, and the disorder was quelled only when foot and horse soldiers appeared with a magistrate and the Riot Act at their head.

She remained rigidly and indignantly a critic of "the mob" throughout this time, nothing more sympathetic than a quiet joke at the expense of a relative who had been sworn in as a special constable, and who was rather vain about his paper of regulations and his badges and truncheon, finding its way into her journal. This relative had such a zeal for "law and order," she thought, and such an ignorance of how to use his truncheon, that she was sure he would kill a respectable man by mistake. "It is a dreadful idea," she comments. And then she meets the other side: "Papa's assistant at the Laboratory came to tea and was very full of the riots. He had been reading up the *Pall Mall Gazette* evidently, and was strong about the mob's 'rights' and the 'disgraceful behaviour of the police,' etc." These manifestations of passion were too strong meat by far for a young girl brought up as she was. The flavour of that agitation was too pungently high. This was the stage when she sym-

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pathised with the poverty of the poor, but not with their aspirations.

Not until June in 1890 does she return again to the movements agitating the masses, and then it is only to refer with approval to some silly tale of a "wild and reckless" man, "calling himself an Atheist and a Socialist," used from the pulpit of St. Mary Abbot's, to induce a rich congregation to subscribe generously to the hospitals of London. In the end the man "repented of his former ways and determined henceforth to serve GOD and his fellow man." But her enlightenment was near. She had almost reached that hill-top which, like a Pisgah, commands an alluring view of the Land of Promise, and whither weary pilgrims return for rest and hope ever after they have once set foot upon it and have beheld the prospect from it. Not so very long afterwards she was to write: "Mr. —— preached at St. Mary Abbot's, and brought in Socialism. He said it was an excellent thing in many ways, and most Christian, but it led to such dangerous things that it was safer after all to have nothing to do with it. If the first part of the statement be true, how can the second be right? I believe the

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injustice and absurdity of it would have been palpable to me even when I worshipped every word Mr. —— said."

That summer she was at Broxbourne and talking politics, and was carried off to "a Conservative meeting at the Squire's. I was taken to this meeting to be converted, but somehow they did not manage it; it only made me rather more disgusted than usual with politicians. . . . The majority of politicians seem to place party feeling before patriotism, in practice if not in theory. I am inclined to the Liberal point of view: I am a Whig. X. and Y. are both Primrose dames, but they do not seem to know very much about it, nor why they joined the League; and X. declared she was rather inclined to be a Liberal." The Whig had already been in the wars. Her relatives, with the exception of her father and his immediate household, were bitter and bigoted Unionists, and had already given her reason to know that political thinking on her own part would be visited by their grave displeasure. In fact, the persecution which she had to endure later on with aching heart and tear-stained cheek, because she knew no guide but conscience, was then begun. They

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were hunting after respectable connections: she was seeking after truth. "I caught it hot and strong for being a Gladstonian."

In April of the following year she writes enthusiastically that two great desires of her heart had just been satisfied—"to see and hear Mr. Gladstone, and to be present at a sitting of the House of Commons." After describing what she saw from the Ladies' Gallery she goes on: "The best of all, however, was when I saw a little old gentleman with straggly white locks come in by the front Opposition Bench, and Ethel cried out, 'There's Mr. Gladstone!' I was so rejoiced. I had so longed to see him, and there he was chattering away to his friends and looking very bright and jovial. . . . Joy filled my heart when he jumped up after a discussion on a question raised by Mr. Sexton as to the composition of some Committee of the House. . . . Mr. Gladstone did not stay very long in the House. Still, I had seen and heard him."

Every form of persuasion was used to get her to turn from her upward path. She was taken to meetings to hear Mr. Balfour, Lord Salisbury, and the chief apostles of Unionism and political respectability. But

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her heart was adamant. No more faithful follower, no admirer more ready chivalrously to sacrifice everything for them, had Mr. Gladstone and the Home Rule cause than she.

But her thoughts were exploring other ways and seeking other interests. Her great sympathy for people in poverty was maturing into a reforming passion. She was reading studies in social conditions. In 1890 she attended the British Association for the first time, and had gone to hear Professor Marshall's presidential address on "Competition" to the Economic Section. She stuck pretty closely to the meetings of that section. Later on, with Mrs. Fawcett as her teacher, she studied political economy at King's College: "She is taking the various questions of the day concerning Capital and Labour, and is very interesting; but I often want to go rather further to the root of the matter than she does, and to be more unorthodox." She had been reading Bellamy's *Looking Backward*; her mind was turning towards Socialism; she recorded that year interviews with some Labour leaders. Discussing sky-signs with a cousin, she writes: "Advertising has become a real torment. It is one of the bad results of competition which would be done away with

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if Government took over the industries as proposed in Bellamy's *Looking Backward.*" And yet she pauses and hearkens back to old memories, and returns—as though reluctant to bid them farewell—to old views, and adds: "Strikes seem to be the fashion just now, and I think a good many sets of workmen take them up in an unbusinesslike and harmful way, and when that is the case they are a source of fearful waste and misery."

In a book where she recorded some of the impressions of the books she read, she wrote of *Looking Backward* in 1890: "GOD teaches us in this world by sin and suffering, and we cannot get rid of these stern masters at one fell swoop. A state of society like that described in Bellamy's *Looking Backward* would not have in it the elements of training which are everywhere visible in the history of society." As a matter of fact, she had gone beyond these opinions, but they came back again and again, taking possession of her mind. They had become visiting strangers, however, and were not really then regular inmates.

In November of that year (1890) a Bible-class which met at her father's house discussed "The Teaching of Christ as bearing



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on Modern Socialism," and she wrote in her journal: "I am so glad of anything which makes Christians interested in general questions of social reform, for I am sure these questions must be solved somehow, and it is only on Christian principles that they can be at all satisfactorily settled." She essays to write a paper on the subject herself. And here a characteristic method was adopted. Books were not enough, and her own heart was not enough. She would go and see what was available to her eyes. She visited the Church Army Training Homes and Labour Home for Tramps, the Salvation Army institutions, and others of a similar nature. Then she turned to the streams of criticism which were at that date flowing through the columns of the *Times*, and comments: "I wish some of the people who talk so much would do a little more.... An opinion formed merely on reading newspaper correspondence, which generally is full of contradictions and strife, is not worth much without practical experience."

A meeting of the Unitarian Congress on April 24, 1891, in St. James' Hall, when "Modern Social Questions" were discussed, was another landmark on her journey. One of the speakers was a "stirrer-up of agita-

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tions, an extreme Socialist," Mr. Ben Tillett, then young and inspiring. "It was very interesting to listen to him, almost painfully so. . . . He was very declamatory, very fiery. He is not accustomed to speak to such audiences; he had travelled for five hours to get there, and was so indignant at being only allowed seven minutes to speak in, that it was lengthened to fifteen. He said he wished he could speak to such audiences every day, and he certainly seemed very earnest about it, and glad to have been asked. . . . I was very sorry they did not seem to be very warm to him. I wanted some one to go forward to shake hands with him and say something when he had done speaking; they should have made him feel at home with them, while, as it was, he seemed rather to be left to himself among them."

This is the beating of the heart that yearned for friendship, for fellowship, for peace: "Why do not you, you rich Unitarian people, go up to him and with outstretched hand offer him praise and welcome?" And yet again the thought of old times returns: "Of course, it was distressing to hear about the indifference of men to Christian teachers when they are so ready to flock round

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Socialist teachers, but in the long run Christianity has the best of it." Yet, she is no longer happy that that should be her last thought now, so she adds: "But if Christians will become Socialists, as well as Christians, then these social questions will be a part, an important part indeed, of the still greater and more wonderful religious life of men. . . . It does seem dreadful to think how many little selfishnesses which are quite customary and unimportant among Christians must appear un-Christian to those who look from a different standpoint."

The strike is always the last of the trials of the well-intentioned middle-class pilgrim sojourning to Labour encamped on its battle-fields. It seems so cruel, so useless, and only those in the forefront of the battle, breathing the passions of combatants and knowing the destruction which is in the mind of the enemy, can judge of its necessity. She begins to see that the hearts of the strikers are hardened as "the result of the ill-feeling, or want of feeling, of the employers either now or in former days."

Then there appear in her writings indications of a discovery of the insincerity of society and of people who hold opinions just because they are common to their

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time. People do not think; they echo the whirring noises of their day. She longed for strenuousness and honesty, for the tearing away of masks and formulæ, for the real. She ran to greet earnestness whatever was its garb or its message. And so she jotted down after a meeting held in connection with the School Board election of 1891, that one of the speakers was "Mr. King, the Socialist—a 'worker,' he calls himself, as opposed to the 'idlers,' the Capitalists who wring money from the poor, and the parsons who teach them to be contented in their station. . . . I was interested in hearing him for he was in earnest, and I had never heard a real live Social-Democrat of that type before."

The process of change was very slow, like all such processes that really affect the whole being. But it was going on. It manifests itself in a critical way in connection with the work which brought her on to the path of social effort. She was deeply attached to her Sunday-school boys; in imagination she lived their lives, and she knew how much the handicap of poverty meant for them. This new revelation that was dawning upon her was like Christianity returning to the world; it was the sacrifice

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of Christ coming to dwell in the hearts of the world as a reality. To the Church, Christ had been in His tomb, worshipped but dead; to the new movement He had risen and was with it as on an Emmaus journey. How could she keep this out of her teaching, for it was becoming as essential to her faith as the Apostles' Creed itself? "I have had a good deal of thought about my Sunday-school boys lately," she wrote in her journal on March 14, 1892, "first as to what I ought to teach them, for my views are in many ways different from those of Mr. Glyn, and it is a difficult question how far one ought to shun all controverted points and yet remain true to one's own convictions." And yet again, a definite step forward is attended with fear and perturbation of spirit. It seemed to be martyrdom all the way.

That autumn she wrote: "I did not do anything very regular all the summer. I felt unsettled, as I do still—as if there was so much work to be done in the world, and most people did so little of it, myself especially, but that does not seem yet to have led to my doing any more. I feel as if what I do is so shallow and unsatisfactory, and I do not know what to turn to instead. . . . I

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do feel still that love is the best thing in the world, the only thing which makes life worth living, and that GOD does love me and has sent me here for some good purpose. I suppose most of my friends would be very surprised to read this that I have written, they all seem to think I am so busy and so bright. GOD help me to be so in a steadier, more earnest, and more profitable way." Then she wonders what she will think in after years of what she has here written: "I hope it will strike me as unworthy and faithless and morbid, and that I shall rise higher instead of sink lower. I know there is a higher, and I believe GOD will bring me to it, and others through me, even in this life, though I do not see how." No faith was more justified than this.

The election of that year found her greatly interested. Her active belief in Home Rule never diminished. "I should like to be a man and put up as a member, but it would be hard work to fight against all the rubbish and the vote-catching dishonesty that are mixed up with, and often hide, true principles."

One day in church in October 1892, through her unsettled and unhappy thoughts, the idea came that she might study medicine. As a doctor, she thought she could best

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serve the people. This seems to have taken a masterful hold upon her imagination for some time. Early in November, whilst the unsettlement was still great, she went to see the Jewish friend living in the East End to whom reference has already been made, and with her went a round of visits. Reflecting on the almost hopeless state of things she saw there, she wrote: "I have got rid of the religious difficulty of believing that GOD made many people only to end in everlasting damnation and torment, but now I have the difficulty of hell on earth, which cannot be escaped from, for it is before your eyes if you only look for it both at the bottom end of the social scale and in lots of places up it, and especially amongst the top lazy ones who live for nothing but self. If they could only be brought a little into contact with the bottom ones, would they not be shaken out of their notions of luxury and idleness? The only light I can see is in the coming of the Son of GOD to live amongst poor blind men. But then, why do I and others like me think ourselves good Christians and believers in the brotherhood of all men when we muddle over insignificant little trifles and let people sin and starve at our very doors?"

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She thought that the greatest authority of the truth of Christianity was the lives of those who professed it. "If I had a brother or a sister that I loved, degraded in the East End, I should not rest till I had done my utmost to save him, and others would think that that was only to be expected of me; but I *have* thousands of brothers and sisters there and I calmly let them be. . . . If these people who live there in squalor were hurt in some big accident or afflicted by some epidemic, every one would be all sympathy and generosity; cannot they see that to be born in such surroundings is worse than any big accident, and that the sin and hopelessness to which they wake up every day is worse than the most malignant epidemic?"

These thoughts were like a storm tearing up her being by the roots. "I felt I was pottering round and frittering away my time, doing some work that was unnecessary and some which others could do as well or better. I wanted something to take up all my time and energy, except a little needed for leisure and recreation. I wanted to have my work to go to in the morning and stick at all day, like those who have to earn their living, and fit in friends and

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frivolities as best they may. . . . I hated the comparative ease and luxury in which we live when I thought of the many good things which only need a little money and attention to set them going."

As I have stated, she had by this time become a school manager, and in December she began her connection with the Hoxton and Haggerston District Nursing Association, of which she became secretary next year. An unemployed agitation had also begun, and she notes that she went to Tower Hill to hear the speeches. Her attitude had changed. The patients of the Nursing Association particularly interested her. She went to see them, she tended them, she heard their tales, and she felt in them the omnipresent soul of humanity. They christened their children after her. Still she was as one seeking. "I wish Charles Kingsley were alive; I should go and see him and ask counsel from him." Political references show that she is no longer hesitating and aloof. "My sympathies are all with the Liberal Party. . . . I shall burst forth some day as a Radical of the Radicals, only, I believe, I shall always be a religious one."

The Sunday-school continues to challenge

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her, and it appears again and again in the troubled sea of her thoughts.

"I felt as if I could not go straight away and teach my boys religion and visit the poor, and all the while live at home." She had dreams of young women of her own class working with her, investigating problems, publishing results, bringing the light of both sympathy and knowledge to the dwellings of rich and poor alike. "'Isms" allured her—"revolutionisms, etc." "I knew I should have to give up a good deal, but I did not mind that." But the ferment, for the time being, produced nothing. "Perhaps one day a daughter of mine will be a doctor and a better woman than I can be."

Meanwhile, she added Charity Organisation visiting in Hoxton to the other work she had in hand. "I am so uncertain as to what direction the 'bothering' should take; not district-visiting, for that seems patronising, though it is exceedingly good in its way: Charity Organisation only deals with exceptional cases; we want to help the general run, and help ourselves at the same time. Besant's *Children of Gibeon* is interesting. Now, if I had a charming Claude I might do wonders, but I know none sufficiently Radical and Socialist to do for me.

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. . . I am glad I was guided through my earlier giddy years by a steady beacon light; I think there is hardly a single thing with regard to that that I would have altered." Her thoughts had also been turning upon a trade union for women, so as to teach them independence and mutual helpfulness, and in connection with that she exclaims: "What a lot of splendid women are at work, and how they are overcoming prejudices and distrust."

Peace and clearness of vision continue to approach like a long-drawn-out dawn in a cloudy morning in the dead of winter. On August 15, 1893, writing from St. Croix, Canton Vaud, where she went for her holidays, she says: "Here I am in a very sweet and sociable frame of mind, produced happily by the amenities of French and Swiss society. Instead of being in the blues so far during my holidays I am more amiable inside me than I have been for long. There is another reason besides the amenities of our foreign friends. I read a good deal before breakfast and have been going through the *Fabian Essays in Socialism*, which I had only partly read before, and they have given me rather clear and more hopeful views about Socialism and the

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way to carry out better the love of the brotherhood and sisterhood. . . . O GOD, let me follow the truth rightly and let me not lose sight of the other good gifts by thinking too exclusively of that which interests and seems right to myself."

Immediately on her return to London she began her visitations in Hoxton. Some of her people "were rather worried and badly off, and it seemed to me perfectly awful that Christians and other good people should know of it and yet go on spending money on luxuries for themselves. One woman remarked when she was saying she was so glad I had had such a nice time abroad: 'It must cost pounds and pounds to go to those places.' Poor creature, pence and pence would satisfy her most pressing desires, and yet she thinks I am so good because I have taken a little trouble about her. . . . Then my old friend, Mrs. Cowdrey, said I deserved all the nice things I saw and did. When they talk like that, I feel inclined to turn round almost fiercely and ask whether they think we rich people are made of different stuff from themselves, that a little kindness in us should go such a long way, That really is part of the secret, though; the rich think themselves of dif-

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ferent stuff; it is kind of them to give the tiniest share of their fortune to those less fortunate; it is a special virtue to give a sixpence or a ten minutes' visit to a poor person, whilst it is nothing out of the way to give a six-guinea present or an hour's call to a rich person; *and the poor share in the delusion.*"

Part of her Hoxton work was done, as I have said, for the local Charity Organisation Society, of which Miss Dendy (now Mrs. Bernard Bosanquet) was secretary. Mrs. Bosanquet has written of what she did, and as the letter gives an idea of how she then worked I give it:

"Her work with us was very varied. She came to us about two days a week, and took a part in all that was going on—committee work, visiting, inquiries, correspondence, etc. I think that what she liked best was visiting the people in their own homes, and carrying out plans for assisting them. Her reports are shrewd as well as sympathetic, and show both her loyalty to the C.O.S. and her indefatigable industry in endeavouring to help the people entrusted to her care. As I read through the records I find her in one case arranging for an

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invalid to be provided with a bath-chair, and for an old pensioner to take her out in it; in another, for six children to be taken in at a day home; in others, taking the allowances made by the committee to applicants for assistance, and interviewing their friends and relations. She had some four or five old pensioners under her special supervision; she writes periodical reports about them full of intimate detail and consideration for their welfare. As an instance of her constant interest in her work, I note a postcard written hurriedly at Euston to say that, having some time to spare in London between two trains, she had used it to visit two of the families in which she was interested."

This year, too, ends in a returned sad note of loneliness. She is like a solitary wanderer in a vast desert, seeking for some oasis of peace and finding no abiding comfort. She waits like one who knows that Fate is to call her to something—but to what, she does not know. Poised on the heaving waters of Eternal Being she waits with something like a breathless expectation for the surface storms that are to determine her course and her haven.

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On the last day of the year she wrote that the wrongdoing in the world still troubled her like a challenge thrown in the face of God Himself. "The only comfort seems in thinking that after all life is short and superficial. . . . But all that is stupid, not to say the abomination of desolation. 'Life is real, life is earnest,' and what tells us so is love. . . . The only creed worth believing in is 'GOD is Love'. . . . GOD, put Thy love into my heart, cleanse it, deepen it, purify and hallow it; it is in such sore need."

The day when she so wrote, she had given up her Sunday-school class, and thus ended work which had had the most profound influence upon her development. The phrases of Christian faith as taught in the Sunday-school belonging to a wealthy and fashionable congregation without the spirit of the belief, were to her only the chaff from which the corn had been taken. She knew that to supply the corn was forbidden. So she wrote to the curate-in-charge: "It is more in practical teaching that I feel so out of place. Religion becomes more and more involved in social questions, and the more I know about them I become a Socialist. Of course I should not teach the boys in your school Socialism, so I felt a

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hypocrite to be teaching them Christ's words and not telling them what the words seem to me to mean. Indeed, I should feel a hypocrite whatever I taught them so long as I come from the midst of every blessing and comfort, whilst close to us are those whom Christ taught us to call our brothers and sisters in want of the love, care, and bodily comforts which we could give them."

And he replied in a letter breathing relief, just the kind of letter which does so much mischief to minds which have been on a painful pilgrimage after truth.

"O GOD," she prays, "send me out again, with words of real meaning and real power, to turn my brothers and sisters to Thee, their heavenly Father and only true Guide." So that was ended.

"I have no particular plans for the year, but I want to read a lot. There are so very, very many sides to the social questions of the day. The more I look into them, the more I feel just on the brink of what there is to think over and learn." She wandered over some of the local governing institutions of London and thought she would like to become a member of the County Council. A night spent with young children leads to



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some moralising on philanthropy. "I said something about the poor little things who had no toys and no kind friends, and she remarked that she had sent some of them 'some of our toys—old ones—that are broken, what we don't want'; also apparently some old clothes—also not wanted. It was an amusing satire upon the present philanthropic public. . . . Later on, she too will be callous, and it will seem natural and 'good' and kind to give of what costs her nothing, or of what costs her as little as possible—only, she will not put it quite so plainly, even in her own mind. . . . We have no 'call,' and so we can jog along in our own comfort, side by side with our brothers and sisters in their degradation and want, and only put out a little finger to help them."

For the first time a strike finds her sympathetic. She subscribed to the coal strike and is enthusiastic at the victory of the men. She discusses Socialism with friends and some relatives—"which greatly pained and grieved" them; but through it all is the prayer: "GOD help me to dedicate 1894 to Thy service through serving my fellow creatures." She is greatly shocked at the scandals which lay behind

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the famous cordite case, her father having been one of those scientific men of the old dying school who pursued knowledge honestly without thought of any reward except the prizes which knowledge brought, and who keenly felt the shame of this trial. "If we had Socialism," she reflects after recording some things connected with this affair, "nobody would want to have patents—or would want to cheat to make use of them."

Entanglements connected with the more remote circles of her family gave her some trouble that year, but though she writes, "I am quite clannish in the way I like them all," neither principalities nor powers could move her from what she thought right. Angrily they had to abandon their projects and designs regarding her; with her heart fixed in other interests and her feet on other paths she went on. Indeed, this section of her relations erected the booths of Vanity Fair to catch hold of her during all these hard years. A Home Ruler with respectable connections might be apologised for; a Socialist was a blot as disgracefully and hopelessly evil as the stain on the hand of Lady Macbeth. Not long after this she was in Glasgow, where "I had

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some whiffs of Anti-Socialism. . . . I thought that would upset them, especially when I saw that [a relation] had been on a platform at a lecture Mrs. Fawcett gave to prove that Socialists meant to destroy family life."

She was drifting more and more into politics. Mr. Samuel Montagu (afterwards Lord Swaythling) was the member for Whitechapel, and with his family she had maintained since her school days—and it was so till the end of her life—a friendship of special warmth and closeness. They were the links which then connected her with Liberalism. In May her journal tells: "I have been doing some political 'propagandising' in Whitechapel lately. The women are much more cordial in being invited to take an interest in politics than I had expected, but of course they need lots of working up before they will take any earnest or intelligent interest in public matters. What ought I to do? What ought I to do?" That "What ought I to do?" hums through this time of her life like a haunting chord of sad music. "Health, time, fairly good education and abilities, and, above all, so many kind friends all around me, and the belief of a loving

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Father above me—these are the talents, but where is the use that I make of them ? "

In 1893 at the British Association an address was given by Professor Shield Nicholson. " It was all against Socialism, and N. F. and L. M. and M., who were sitting with me, thought it very one-sided and poor." She was no longer only a sympathetic onlooker; she was a disciple; she was a champion. In the autumn she had taken part in a movement to form women's trade unions. " I do not know if anything will come out of it, but I should like it above all things if I could help. I have been electioneering somewhat too in connection with the School Board election both in Chelsea and Shoreditch, and with the vestry in Paddington and the vestry and guardians in Shoreditch. I did not do canvassing because I do not like the principle; but I did lots of writing and some looking up of people on the polling days. I was glad papa was not in for this School Board election (he retired gracefully after twenty-one years' work on the Board), the religious feeling was so bitter (Query—Can *religious* feeling be *bitter* ?), one side calling the other Papists, and the others calling them in return Secularists. Papa would have

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been called a Secularist! . . . I was specially interested in the Boards of Guardians. I helped Mrs. Grout, wife of a Hoxton working-man, to become a guardian in Shoreditch, and I think she will do good work."

1895 had come, and that year brought her to the open road and a clear light. In November 1893, when the mood of the dying year was creeping over her, and she seemed to hear the hurrying of the foot of Time, she wrote on a Sunday evening after having been at church and having walked back through the Park, beautiful in the decay of its leafy covering: "I wonder whether I shall meet him in this world. I mean *my* him, my sir, my knight. I believe that each of us will meet her him or his her in some world. If love lasts on to another world for those whose souls are married here, can we believe that GOD leaves some souls always unmarried? . . . Oh GOD, Thou hast not given me Thy best gift. Oh let me make no mistake about it, and if I should use it for myself and him instead of for Thee and Thy other children, keep it from me till I am ready to have it, however far away that time may be."

But just as the change was coming, she wrote to her friend, Miss Lily Montagu, a

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letter dated from Capel Curig on September 2, so characteristic that it must be quoted:

"Here we are in most splendidly bracing air, all among the highest Welsh mountains; and we have any amount of walks up them—my ideal form of enjoyment. We had a fine view from Snowdon on Saturday, and he is such a fine bare precipitous creature. Last week was stormy and misty, and then he looked grand. To-day is perfectly still and sunny; not quite so beautiful, but very soothing. In fact I am getting to a much worse pass than that reversion to good old Toryism with which you threaten me. I feel rather in the state of mind of Tennyson's lotus-eaters; and it is years since I felt at all like that. This morning before breakfast I went out in a boat on the lake (I had already had an hour and a half's reading of philosophy, Spencer's *First Principles*, in the garden), and there, drifting and rowing about quite alone on the middle of the water with the reeds and the fishes and all round the mountains and the trees, even the thought of a London 'bus could not make me desire ever to revisit my native city; and I wished slums and

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society, and even my beloved Socialism, at the bottom of the sea. However, hunger in time drove me in to breakfast, and as I found a very nice one, which I dare say various people had been at the trouble of preparing for me, I suppose my Socialistic theories are right after all, and that I ought occasionally to do some work in return. Would it be useful to take a post as waitress in this hotel? Now I am quite mundane again, and looking forward with joy to see my beloved Cockneydom only for an hour on Thursday, in passing through to go to my grandmother's in Berkshire. After that, the B. A.; so you see we're actually finding out where our holidays are to be spent.

. . . . .

"*Chester, Sept. 5th.*—You may be relieved to hear that I had enough energy left on Monday to go for a drive in the morning, and a solitary walk of nearly twenty miles in the afternoon—so lovely over hill and dale, and by mountain and moor. To-day I am looking forward to tea at Pembridge Square: I think I shall want to hug the house when I see it again, and as it is being painted it will make me so messy. I'm afraid I shan't have time to run round

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and see Ethel: we shall have less than half an hour at home."

That year I was the candidate of the Independent Labour Party for Southampton, and in May was in St. Thomas' Hospital. Whilst there, a letter came from an unknown person signed "M. E. Gladstone," enclosing a subscription for my election fund. My acknowledgment, I find, is noted in a small special notebook thus: "First letter from J. R. MacDonald: May 29, 1895"; and beneath is the further note: "First saw him, Pioneer Club, June 18, 1895." I took part in a debate on Socialism there that evening, and she was present.

On July 11 she wrote in her journal: "Lately, however, I have been advancing rather fast in the direction of the kind of social and Socialistic work that I always want to do, so I had better chronicle some of it. First, however, for the earlier part of the year. We had exceptionally cold weather in February and March—water-pipes frozen nearly all over London, people dying of cold, etc. Personally, I rather enjoyed it; I had a cold plunge every morning which warmed me for the rest of the day, but it was very awful to see

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the suffering it caused all around, especially, of course, to old people and poor people. It made me feel rather rebellious sometimes. I felt hard because I could do nothing to help it, and I did not see why GOD should allow it. But of course physical suffering like that, though it seems very dreadful at the time, is a very small evil compared with the blackness and horror of moral evil—that is what we should be careful not to forget." Charity flowed in an abundant stream to meet this state of things. "It is rather annoying to a Socialist mind that people have to wait for such extreme and apparent want to be touched and to give of their fulness to others."

She was filling up her time very rapidly now with this and that piece of social work. Her duties as a manager of several Board Schools, her work in connection with the Children's Holiday Fund, her Hoxton activities, kept her thoughts busy and filled up her time. The Women's Industrial Council had also just been started, and she joined that, and began that unique series of investigations into the conditions of working women, and originated that fruitful connection which was formed between

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the Council on the one hand, and Government departments, labour organisations, and private individuals at home and abroad on the other. "Also," she writes, "I have made friends with a member of the Independent Labour Party . . . so I have been helping him a little by writing work."

She followed the General Election of this year with keen carefulness. She helped in various constituencies, and in consequence, "the old questions which always bother me of how far I ought to do Socialist work whilst I live at home" arose. In that fine imperturbable common-sense way which was so characteristically hers, and which saved her from worries about unessential and trivial or fantastic matters, she concluded: "I think it is a good thing not to bother too much, but do the work that is nearest." She was really very happy at home. Her father never joined in the battle against her opinions, partly because he belonged to that type of men who are so transparently honest themselves that they always assume other people's honesty, but mainly because he held in great reverence every sincere conviction of an inquiring mind battling its way to belief. To a friend who was

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trudging a road similarly painful to her, but whose difficulties were religious rather than political, she wrote long afterwards (March 22, 1911): "In my own case, fortunately, my father did not mind my going a little further ahead than he cared to go—in politics, that was, but of course I know it [family opposition] in the case of other relations. But when it touches religion and the home life it must be specially difficult. I suppose we shall all have a wider vision some day, and meanwhile we can only follow what seems to us to be right."

Her Socialism was becoming generally known; she was getting into the midst of the current. Of the election she wrote to Miss Montagu: "I suppose you are cross with Mr. MacDonald for helping to lose Sir Francis Evans' seat; but I think the Liberals have themselves to blame. . . . As for the Independent Labour Party I am not at all turned against it by the results of the elections; quite the contrary, for I think they show that the Liberals and Radicals, as they are at present, cannot satisfy the people. . . . I feel rather jealous of Australia. Did you see in the papers this morning what a nice big Labour Party

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they have there? But then, of course, the conditions in a new country are so different, and their running ahead so quickly in the Socialist direction has disadvantages as well as advantages."

A fortnight later she wrote in her journal: "One day I met Miss Enid Stacey (September 1895) at the British Museum, and spent the lunch-hour with her, with very interesting talk about Socialist work, etc. I like her very much, and it is wonderful for a girl like her to have such power of addressing thousands of people. She was rather despondent in her views of the working man—either a fanatic or a 'stupid sheep.' But what was to be expected? He would find in himself the virtues of responsibility only when he was responsible."

In April 1896 she joined the Independent Labour Party. A month before that she wrote to a friend: "I cannot help thinking how wonderfully I am getting in touch with just the work I want."

Thus another section of her life ended. The preparation was over. Her hand was on her work.

Her journal opens for 1896 in this way: "A new year begins; lots of opportunities

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for good resolutions, but I have made none. I have only prayed to GOD to let me make good use of my life." She was at the work most congenial to her, living with the people in her heart, seeing them in their homes day by day, making them glad by her girlish radiance of face, and shy, somewhat self-conscious manners, meeting frequently the men and the women who were in the midst of the agitations and movements to which she had been drawn. She retained her own opinions and views quite firmly even then, and her journal contains some wise reflections upon some of the people she met, such as "some of his statements are too extreme for me to think them quite right or wise." But she is of opinion that it is "better to fight wildly than to let the enemy creep on without attempting any fight at all; but it is best of all to fight wisely."

She had begun to fight wholeheartedly. An enthusiasm which had been, but which had begun to ebb, returned, and henceforth it was steady like an ocean tide, not uncertain like a mountain torrent. It never again left her. Her hands became full to overflowing. "I have a sort of 'rushed' feeling as if there was more to be done than I could

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get through; exactly the feeling I so disapprove of and dislike." Even then she was finding her way to people's hearts; they were welcoming her and marvelling at her. "I was surprised at being described in a sermon I went to hear Mrs. Bosanquet give at Westbourne Park Chapel this afternoon on 'My Duty to my Neighbour.' She was speaking of the various ways of helping people, and how anything to be useful must have trouble taken about it. She said it was a good thing to get to know a district thoroughly and the agencies at work there, and the things that people do and think. Suddenly, just as I was thinking how very far I was from that ideal, she began describing me and the growth of my interest in Shoreditch. I caught her eye and went crimson; it took me so aback; she knew I was going to be there, so it was very mischievous of her."

Her inability to be anything but thorough made her progress slow. She was slow to come to conclusions regarding her beliefs; she was slow to associate herself with parties formed to advance her beliefs. In February 1896 she wrote: "I am glad that my principles have kept me from joining any Socialist society (except the Socialist Club);

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I like to be independent." She found divers creeds and camps within the Socialist movement. The dissension of the early Church was there. Indeed, until the Women's Labour League was founded in 1906, she did not take a very burning interest in organisations. They all abounded with vexations. She held her beliefs for reasons which organisations of the multitude could neither strengthen by their authority nor weaken by their follies. She herself believed—that was all. She was what her faith made her. All her associations were as circumstances of her growth —the light and air, the soil and moisture, the sun and rain, from which the flowers grow. She was happy in association with others, but the bond always had to be one of personal affection or regard. One friend whom she met at this time, a quiet, simple, honest working woman, of direct ways and the centre of a worshipping family, had perhaps more influence upon her than anyone else. She writes of her in the spring of 1896: "I had a long talk with Mrs. Hicks at her house a fortnight ago; she is very real and earnest; so unaffected and downright, and yet you feel a deep emotion impelling her and consecrating what she

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does." She attached herself to such people with the reverence of a devotee.

But in April she made up her mind to become associated formally with the Independent Labour Party and joined the young Hoxton branch; that month she was up full tilt against some one who had been advocating the purging of the party of middle-class people. "Who are middle-class people?" she asked. The group of qualities known as "middle-class" is associated neither with every individual born in that class, nor only with those so born, but only with the class generally, and also with those who are allured by it even when they do not belong to it. Some members of the well-to-do classes are more simple-minded than members of the working classes; some of the most typical middle-class shortcomings are found amongst people who do not belong to the class at all. She herself always used the expression to denote qualities, tastes, and pursuits which she held in no esteem, but she always said that she was thinking of a spirit and not of a social status, of separate individuals and not of an unassorted mass.

That year she was very happy. She beamed with happiness. She came to the



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Socialist Club in St. Andrew's Hill, Bride Street, very frequently after a morning's work in Hoxton, her arms generally full of papers. She was so very different from the rest of us. She was like a girl who had just left school and who was finding the world a delightfully wide place full of intense interest, and whom the world was finding to be an attractively strange mingling of child-like innocence and mature common sense. She came to the British Museum earlier in the morning, and brought all the sunshine of the world and all its seriousness with her. She went to her Hoxton work, and no Russian lady of high degree more wholeheartedly became as one with the common folk in the early days of Nihilism, than she did. Living humanity, working humanity, poverty-stricken humanity was her nearest kindred. With it she was never demonstrative, over it she never gushed. She just liked to be with it, to minister unto it; and there was a quiet strength about her presence that was more consoling than expressed sympathy.

The evolution proceeds like a great symphony. Sweetly peaceful are the opening bars. Soon the melody is broken by a disquieting note which comes again and again

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until it has grown into a theme and the whole music has changed. There is no more peace. There is confusion, wistfulness, beseeching. The world has become ruined by a strange magic as it were, and the pilgrim, with straining eyes and doubting heart and yet upheld by a mysterious indwelling power, gropes and stumbles forward in search of light and order. Amidst the passages of confusion, however, the notes of religious faith run unbroken and firm. This music which wandered over the chaos like the whispering of a gentle wind is creative love. It is hushed; it steals again over the ruins; it is baffled; it twitters like a bird dreaming in the night; it rises and bursts into bars of song. The spirit of the Lord is moving on the face of the waters. Fluted notes come like thrush voices in the dawn; the deep brass instruments change from the heralds of doubt to the champions of great conviction, not a conviction that flaunts itself in the face of the world, but which, with a heart heavy for the times, sets to prepare a way for the future. Then in great sweeping notes, not of triumph, for that is not yet, the allegro movement ends with a song of thankfulness that the pilgrim has seen the light and has lifted up her head.

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## *Chapter V*

## 8, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS

WHEN the summertime was at its height, she got engaged, and her attitude of mind can best be understood if I tell that the term of endearment she used most frequently was "My dearest sir." In her most sacred feelings there was always a strange reticence begotten of a sense of the holiness of life. There was much marrying and giving in marriage in the family that year, and her father did not go abroad as usual in the summer, but took from a friend a charming house on the edge of Blackheath on the hill above Chilworth Station. On the skyline of the long ridge which shut in the view to the north stood St. Martha's Chapel, and a Pilgrim's Way wended along the hills to the shrine of St. Thomas in Canterbury. On the south was the wide free stretch of open heather, and wandering on the one side or the other we dreamt our dreams of what was to be. I find now,



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though I did not know then, that she thought my life was to be short (I had been threatened with some organic disease), and she was quite consoled facing all the possibilities and content with the prospects of carrying on my work when I had ceased to trouble about it. The summer was brilliant, the land was beautiful, the household was gracious, and she was serenely blessed. It was the final act in her consecration. November came with its raw days and stifling fogs, and in the midst of them she was married. Was it a mysterious revelation, or was it but a coincidence? That day she talked sorrowfully of the sadness of her mother's death when the triumph of life was but beginning. She was specially pleased that her home was to remain in London, for with all her love of peaceful nature she was "a town bird," at home only where she felt the masses living up close to her. From America she wrote: "And then won't London seem nice after our wanderings?"—from Australia, "No place comes up to London."

On November 30 we returned to our own home at 3, Lincoln's Inn Fields. The winter sun gleamed on the bare branches of the trees. I remember still, as though it were

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but yesterday, the beautiful sunniness of the cold day, and as we turned away from the tall windows, her eye caught a picture, "The Happy Warrior," which a friend had given to us. "Will it be like that?" she asked. With her it certainly was. She hastened up to Lossiemouth, where the New Year time was spent. She longed to have one who was a mother to her—one all the more dear because she had been buffeted by the world. In the early days of the year we returned to our labours, and thenceforth there was no pause. All our interests were the same. We ploughed in the same furrow. In May she wrote: "It is perfectly delightful now to look out on our Fields. They are so fresh and green, and then there are laburnums and lilacs, hawthorns and irises, and last, but not least, our County Council band on Friday evenings. I sit out there sometimes with a book, and the place is quite lively with all the children playing. They make friends with and laugh at me, and the tired mothers with their babies, and the clerks, and all the sorts of people who sit there."

Her first anxiety was that our home should be open. She had so often seen marriage make a difference in the lives of

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active workers. Family happiness became a screen against the world; social duties absorbed precious moments. That, she was determined to guard against. When she died, it was said in some newspapers that she founded a political salon. That is not what she did at all. She opened her home to her friends, and so much did her work mean for her, so firmly was she convinced that all thought and action were but modes of God's mind, that everybody working in the same movements was her friend. For Society as such she had a great distaste. It bored her. Nobody enjoyed more thoroughly than she did a frolicksome time. She could play with the rowdiest and joke with the most facetious. But she chose her companions for such occasions. "I do not require to change my friends when I change my interests," she said. "We can all change together. If I can work one day and make merry the next, so can my friends. It is a great mistake to arrange your life so that one set of people should always see you on committees and another always see you wasting your time." "I must have my extra special friends to have high jinks with this year," she wrote to a working woman in 1909.

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Thus the "salon" came. Once every three weeks or so for some ten years our rooms were crowded with men and women busy in the service of Labour and Socialism. The shy recruit just arrived in London came to see those of whom he had heard much; the stranger from the ends of the earth, black, yellow, or white in colour, came as a guest; meetings were fixed up, plots may have been hatched. Amidst her guests she moved, chatting, cheering, introducing, for her wonderful memory for names and faces and her vigilant sympathy made her a perfect hostess for a great crowd.

One who came to us one of those evenings as a stranger wrote from British Columbia: "It is difficult to believe that if I return again to England and mount your stairs, I shall not see that happy young woman who received me as though I had been an old friend. I was lonely till that night and was beginning to hate England. Nobody was interested in me. I had been civilly received, and that was all. But five minutes in your house were enough to banish my bad mood. It was all the more wonderful because I was nobody in particular, and she took as much pains with me as though I had been one of the important

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men I met that night. The news of her death was cabled here, and when I saw it in the newspapers I felt sick at heart and tears came into my eyes."

Another story will explain still more fully in what spirit she opened her door to those whom she welcomed. Not long after we were married there came to us with an introduction an obscure member of a Colonial Parliament. He had come here for health reasons, and was finding London cold, and busy, and absorbed. "We shall have some friends to meet you," she said. The stranger modestly told us that no one knew him and that he did not merit such attention. "Oh," she replied, "we are nobodies ourselves." The gathering was held, and the stranger was cheered. The years went, and in our wanderings we reached the land where the stranger of that night had become Premier. Messengers met us at the landing-place, a yacht steamed down to take us into the capital city, generous hospitality greeted us. The Premier himself was absent on State business, and we remarked to some of his colleagues that they were too lavish in their kindness. They laughed and told us that they were instructed to do the best for us. "He has never forgotten your kind-

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ness to him when he was in London," they said, "and when nobody else thought anything about him. He has stopped Cabinet business to tell us of it."

"You certainly have a pleasant way of living," wrote one well known as a settlement worker in America, "and glad were we that we were able to have a wee share of it during our stay in the big metropolis"; and her companion writing at the same time added: "It was very good to see your attractive home and you three in it, and also did we enjoy the evening squash of interesting folk."

Thus she became the centre of a great companionship of men and women doing work in the world. At first it was confined to those whom she met in almost daily intercourse, but it widened and widened until at last it stretched round the earth and no mail came or went without bearing fibre of the bond which kept it together. Few have met more people, none has made more active friends; no companionship was more widely scattered or more intimately personal in its relationship, none included so many people whose lives were really counting in the sum of human effort in the world.

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When the election of 1906 came and I was sent to the House of Commons, my evenings could not be spent at home. Then, she said, the heart went out of these gatherings. Somehow or other she did not like to have them when I was not there or when I only rushed in for a few minutes. "They are not family enough," she said, and they ceased. Often she talked of starting them again, but the decree of fate was otherwise. That was one of the many sacrifices, which she greatly grudged, to the doubtful utility of Parliamentary life.

In this spirit of friendship, which was but a form of human consciousness as apart from class consciousness, all her work was done. It was the explanation of her whole personality. It blinded her to every distinction save that of human genuineness. Once, when a controversy was raging about the virtues of class consciousness as a motive force in progress, she wrote that she had no love for the class from which she came, because it wasted so much of its life in seeking after and trying to enjoy material things, and because it cut itself off from the humanity which was God's special care. It prized tinsel and trash. But to the end some of her most valued friends belonged to

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that class, and she was always happy to work with it or through it when her interests threw her in its way. The fact was, class made no difference to her. I have known her, dressed for an evening party, interview a poor working woman on such calmly equal terms, that I am certain the visitor was not conscious of any distinction, despite its aggressive proclamation by the dress; and a few minutes later she was in the midst of a fashionable crowd with her demeanour absolutely unchanged from what it was when she was talking to the working woman.

In time invitations to purely social events dropped off—much to her relief. These parties froze her up; their talk made her retreat within herself, and she never shone at them. "It is so nice to be left just with those one cares for," she once said. "The world is a wide place, but one does not always want to be roaming, jolting from mountains to plains and from meadows to deserts. One cultivates a little garden and grows his roses there, and under their scented boughs rests from labour and plans new work. So it is with one's social relations. The home is the garden. I do not want to know people whose society I

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would not enjoy in my own home." Perhaps there is a certain narrowness about this, but it is the narrowness of the feeling that time is short and very precious, and that the garden loved is as wide as the world. Besides, there was no lack of friends. They came at all hours and on all missions—the poor refugee, the stricken mother, the crippled wage-earner, the stranger from distant places, the political committee, the young person at the gateway of the world, the personal friend; and friendship, advice, charity were never withheld.

An extract from a letter written May 10, 1910, will give an idea of how people came to see her: "The visitors from the ends of the earth are pouring in thick and fast. How we are to manage even to *see* all the people who have been kind to us in their own countries and now are here, I do not know. Yesterday G——, our very special Indian official friend, turned up, and we had him to lunch at the House to-day. Thisafternoon Vida Goldstein * came in and found the sewing-party † in full swing.

* The leader of the Women's Rights movement in Australia, who has stood twice as candidate for the Senate.

† A Women's Labour League sewing-party met every week at our house.

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This morning an Indian woman doctor came. Yesterday four callers met on the doorstep, none of them knowing each other."

Sometimes she was blamed by her friends because she was a little careless of her appearance, and a myth arose that she consciously modelled her dress upon that of a working woman. Nothing was farther from her thoughts. She would have spurned such an intention. She delighted in seeing others well dressed, but she took no interest in it for herself. She generally gave her needlework to some woman whom she desired to help, and did not mind very much what trouble that gave to herself. I remember one very outrageous production which was a result of this method of getting dresses made. "I will wear it a short time," she said. "If I didn't, the poor woman would be terribly cut up." To tell the truth, she had no eye for her own appearance. Once, when she was to play an important part in a deputation which was to wait upon a Minister of State, her friends insisted upon her getting a new hat and a blouse, and, I believe, in order to make quite sure that their designs would be carried out, they determined to do the purchasing themselves. Imagine their despair when

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they found on the great day, by unmistakable bunchings and misfits, that the gaudy attire had been put on the wrong way round! I could never make out whether it was a joke or an accident. The fact was that she was so absorbed in being, that considerations of appearance never troubled her, and her excessively simple attire was an expression of her Puritanism, but it was never the studied expression.

Her relationship to her children was that of a big intimate friend. They played round her, and on her knee as she worked; she laid them down on the floor when they were tiny and with an eye upon them she discussed things with visitors. A nod or a word to them came as a parenthesis. I can see her now in these morning days sitting at the big black table, a little bundle lying at her side, from which arms and legs waved and a gurgle of joy came, she looking over her arm every now and again and joining in the baby ripplings, whilst the sun poured down upon both from the wide-open windows.

An artist friend, Miss Bowerley, used to come and sketch the children to be worked into the delightful imps and hobgoblins which she drew, and, writing on March 3,

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1912, she gave the following touching impression of mother and child: "I got some sketches of Sheila. She was with the little nurse when I arrived. She was getting very fretful, but when Margaret appeared, which she did very soon, Sheila beamed all over. Margaret took her in her arms, and fondled her, and Sheila smiled and smiled. Margaret then bathed her with such skill and care. I loved watching it, Sheila crowing and laughing and clinging to her mother all the while. Then Margaret put her to bed, and perhaps the loveliest moment was when Sheila, snug and pink and warm in bed, smiled up at her mother, who bent over her with an affection I shall never forget. It was an ideal picture of motherhood, inspiring to a poet or an artist, but above all gripping everything that is human in one. It just completed my idea of Margaret. I always admired her immensely, but that day I realised I had never known the mother side of her."

It is little whims, however, which reveal great characteristics best of all, and nothing shows more aptly the fact that the instinct of motherhood was the predominating motive of all her work than the way she used to send her babies to visit the office

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staffs of the committees with which she was working. "We shall never forget," wrote one of the staff at the office of the National Union of Women Workers, "the great joy we had when little Sheila came down to pay us a visit."

Her profound reverence for everything that had life determined her attitude to her children as they grew up. She was sensitively anxious to respect their rights and their individuality. Her tolerance of every kind of honestly held opinion was strained to breaking point with "the parents' rights" claim which rampages in the field of education. In a miscellaneous gathering of people where she was not feeling very much at home, I found her cornered with a lady one afternoon, discussing the Education Bill which was then before Parliament. The lady, assuming very innocently that my wife being in such company must have "respectable" views, was talking jejunely about the rights of parents—and talking very volubly. "Don't you think that our children have some rights against us?" inquired my wife wearily. The lady was taken aback by such an unfamiliar thought and stammered a request for information. "For instance," was the further remark,



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"don't you think they have a right to be protected against the silly prejudices of their parents—mine and yours both?"

The motherly love of the penguin which smothers its offspring was not hers. She saw that mistaken concern illustrated in many a household which was a model of motherly care in the eyes of a blind world. The result of leading-strings and culture under glass was a feeble manhood and a silly womanhood, was failure of the most dire and dreadful kind. Her little folks were treasures given to her to guard and protect, not to mould into her own image. They had personalities of their own, and inheritances of their own. They were individuals not appendages, and it was her duty, she thought, to enrich them by teaching them how to use their own talents and faculties. Hers was to provide an atmosphere for them to breathe, a purity for them to feel, a liberty for them to employ. She seemed to say: "I am at hand to hold and to help you *if necessary*, but I want you to develop your own little selves so that when you are men and women you will be persons of a free will and not creatures of circumstance." She believed in discipline, but not the discipline of force,

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not the bowing to an outside order which imposed itself by punishment, but the discipline of spiritual desire, of reasoned conduct, of moral control of emotion and appetite. The words she used in a sentence in the letter she wrote telling her children that their grandmother had died were very significant: "We must try to comfort each other."

Part of this training consisted in teaching them to help each other, to "pick themselves up," to do without her. She held that it was good for them to be at home in the world. A band of friends were always delighted to have them to stay with them: "Come and look after the children whilst we go and fight Leicester," she wrote to a trusty friend who had offered help. When she went away for a long time, she sent them to Lossiemouth, a little sad at heart, but convinced it was to their advantage. The sea, the moors, the hills, and the weather-beaten fishermen she was sure would be an abiding influence upon them for good. Only when she went to India was she really unhappy about leaving them. Those subtle impulses which speak to us in mysterious ways were telling her that Death was encompassing us in his wings. She was like

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a mother bird, fluttering and unhappy, when the reapers appear in the field where her nest is. Nearly every letter she wrote to my mother, who was in charge of the children at that time, has the perturbed note of danger in it.

When our boy of five died in February 1910, after our return, she seemed to withdraw into the most lonely and the darkest places of her temple. Outwardly she was wonderfully calm. But here again that terrible inability to let the floodgates of grief loose and to throw oneself on the neck of a friend was evident. She bade every one "sit ye here while I go and pray yonder." In letters she expressed her feelings of bereavement—but only to specially close friends who were working with her intimately. Mrs. Bruce Glasier was one of these, and to her she wrote on March 6, 1910: "I do not feel our loss a bit more distant. Of course it is not far off—only four weeks to-day since the service. Every day I seem to feel it as though I had never realised it before. It is nice having the other children, but everything they do reminds me that the one is missing who always hurried on so cheerily to keep up with the elder ones and generally led in

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any row that was going. Then I go over and over the last illness: I seemed to get so near to him then." And again: "These statistics of mortality among children have become unbearable to me. I used to be able to read them in a dull scientific sort of way, but now I seem to know the pain behind each one. It is not true that other children can make it up to you, that time heals the pain. It doesn't; it grows worse and worse. We women must work for a world where little children will not needlessly die." A friend who had just lost a daughter told me he had had much comfort from reading Cicero's letters on the death of his daughter, and I gave them her to read. I find she refers to them in a letter to a friend where she comments: "I can but return to my own faith and hope."

Such things show how easy it would have been for her to have smothered her children with attention. It would have been easier for her heart to have given them the conventional attentions than to have carried through the more Spartan programme. Her letters to personal friends were always tender with references to their progress, to their play, to their ways, to their peculiarities; the letters which her friends wrote of her

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after her death invariably refer to their place in her household.

Her ideal of a mother was that she should be the dearest friend of her children—dearest because they have no secrets from her, and because they know that they owe it to her that they have grown up into the fulness of the power of their manhood. In this respect she was a Roman. The world was a battlefield to her; her sons and daughters were to go out and take a sturdy part in the strife. For that, the home was the nurture ground, and the mother the inspiring guardian. She hoped that when the time came for them to leave her fireside and depart on their own ways, they would stand manfully erect, honest-eyed and clean-souled to receive her farewell and her blessing.

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## *Chapter VI*

# WORK

Our home became a workshop of social plan and effort. To her the whole of mankind was on a pilgrimage, down many different ways seeking the peace which comes only from perfection. She was interested in them all, and her Socialism was the idea which inspired and guided her. She saw in it not only the economic organisation of society which she deemed to be necessary, but the love of the brethren which was involved in her love of God, the Father. She knew that Socialism is more than an organised movement and a creed; it is a spirit and a tendency. It suffuses all things in this age. Its morality is the command of the heart uttered in persuasive firmness that the injustice done to one is the reproach heaped upon all; its economics is the imperative to which commercialism itself must respond; its politics is the path mapped out by Destiny



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for a state which uses communal consciousness as a protector of individual life and liberty.

So wherever she saw useful work to be done, she longed to be doing it. In investigation, on labour committees, in politics, in temperance, in social purity, in trade unionism, she found herself. Painstaking, methodical, practical in the event and duty of the day, she began always at the beginning and did not wander after delights till her work was done. She nevertheless saw the revelations of the future in the task of the present. She came of a line of Doctors of Divinity, and Fellows of the Royal Society, said a proud relative of hers, and her life illustrated the combination. A Blue Book was second in rank of sacredness only to the Gospels. The only people she truly distrusted—not as moral leaders (though she sometimes had her doubts about that), but as stable friends in the work of the world—were the impatient idealists who, "looking not to their feet, were sure to fall," or "looking only at the moon and finding it getting no nearer after some days' travel, come to the conclusion that there is no progress and that their fellow pilgrims are only frauds."

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The background of her life is rich with the colouring of the ideal, but its foreground is full of the dust of conflict. Through it you seem to hear the whirring of the many wheels grinding out events in the mills of God.

Women and children were her special care. Both were particularly sacred in her eyes. The child was the flower fresh from the garden of God, with the divine fragrance still like an atmosphere around it; the woman represented maternity, she through whom the race was born, and upon whose knee the race was nursed, whose face was beautiful with hope and sorrow. And both the child and the mother were as outcasts in the world. She saw them dirty, neglected, coarse, the pinched victims of want and the decorated playthings of sensuousness in every street and in every drawing-room, and without any arguing with her conscience, without giving a thought to consequences, without offering the homage of doubt to the tremendous difficulties of doing anything at all, she began her work instantly she heard the call.

Two women inspired her then. The first was Mrs. Hicks, a working woman of some note as a Socialist worker, with a strong

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motherly face, a firm independent character, a great store of good simple common sense, and, above all, the mother of children who doated upon her and admired her. The other was Mrs. Hogg, a very gracious and graceful woman, to whose influence we owe the inquiry of the Board of Education into wage-earning school children, and whose articles on this and similar subjects—like *Fur Pulling in the South Side of London*—were the cause of much administrative reform and the beginning of our enlightenment in sweating conditions and home work. Strangely cruel had been the fate of some of those women, sent, one almost would have thought, by a special Providence to help their fellow creatures. Mrs. Hogg died, long before her work was done, on November 14, 1900, during a holiday in Florence. My wife mourned for her as for a mother. They had been inseparable, the elder counselling and encouraging the younger, the younger admiringly looking up to the elder like a disciple to his master.

Her work was done mostly through two organisations, the width of whose activities gave full scope for her interests—the Women's Industrial Council and the

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National Union of Women Workers. The Women's Labour League came later, a ripened fruit of experience which she was not to enjoy for long. She was a member, and no mere sleeping one at that, of a good many other societies, like the International Labour Laws Association, on the committee of which she sat, and it is characteristic of her that she never joined any society in which she could not take an active interest. Surely if any one could be reasonably excused from taking part in the mere drudgery side of business meetings, she could, but she zealously attended, for instance, the branch meetings of the Independent Labour Party to which she belonged, and took part in its most insignificant work. She could never bear to be regarded as anything but an ordinary humble worker in great causes, and she felt that it was as important to address envelopes at elections as to head deputations to Ministers, and make speeches which would be reported in the press next morning. Nothing done for a good purpose was to her common or unclean, nor was she ever unwilling to do it. She was completely self-less and thought only of the great movements with which her mind was allied.

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Enforcing the double view that morally the essential, however obscure a detail it may be, must not be overlooked, and that scientifically progress comes from apparently small changes, she said in her speech at the Guildhall Conference of Unemployed Women: "It will teach us and help us to realise bigger ideals if we do the little things that come to hand and that lead on to the greater changes."

After she was moving towards the centre of the stage, she wrote to a friend: "As to doing 'something splendid some day': if you mean by that something big before the eyes of the world, I have not the very slightest ambition to do it, and if I did, I should know that I really wasn't doing anything more splendid than the very quietest, most poked-in-the-hole person who was living up to his lights and using life for unselfish and not selfish purposes." And to the same friend a little later on she said: "So I am in a good temper even when I think what a drop in the bucket is anything we can do. That keeps me from being cocky when things go better than I expected." And these were not mere words.

To give anything like a complete account

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of what she did in these two societies is an absolute impossibility; to give an idea of it is most difficult. Piles of letters, reports, memoranda, notes remain in evidence of it, and the variety of the subjects with which they deal, together with the technicality and intricacy of their detail defy classification. These records include: housing, in which she took a very keen interest, and upon which she delivered a series of three lectures, full of the most valuable information, to the Women's Diocesan Association at the end of 1900; the administration of rural sanitary law, she having attempted on various occasions to induce Ministers to make local sanitary inspectors and medical officers of health independent of local influence; the management of hospitals, especially of the out-patient departments, regarding which she conducted an elaborate inquiry mainly through branches of the Women's Labour League; the amendment of the factory law, to which she returned again and again; the appointment of women both on public authorities—especially education committees, she having been a promoter and original secretary of the Committee, which had Professor Jebb as its chairman, to secure the appointment of

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women on secondary education committees created under the Act of 1902—and on administrative staffs, especially as sanitary officers; emigration, as from her personal experience she had grave suspicions of the work of not a few of the agencies; the treatment of the fishing girls who follow the herrings round our coasts; every phase of shop assistants' work, from living in to fines and deductions, in the latter of which she took a keen interest, collecting, from 1896, numerous lists of fines imposed by leading shops in the country, and making them the basis of several articles (for instance, see *Women's Industrial News*, March 1898), and of a paper read to the annual conference of the National Union of Women Workers; laundrywork, upon which an elaborate report by her appeared in the above journal in June 1907. Indeed, every question of interest to women which was discussed from 1896 to 1911, whether political, industrial, domestic, or personal, is dealt with in this mass of papers, and in every case her knowledge shown is first-hand, the correspondence is with the experienced authorities, the proposals made are all in touch with reality. If she is interested in homework, she gets addresses from

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public health authorities, and, notebook in hand, she goes out herself to see with her own eyes and question with her own intelligence. Thus she spends day after day trudging through street and alley, exploring tenements, diving deep into the masses of overcrowded and poverty-stricken humanity. If she is interested in barmaids, she gets into personal touch with themselves, she meets them, she discovers who it is who knows their lives, she subscribes to papers where traces of them can be found, and, finally, she goes out when the bars are busy, at one hour in this place and another in the next place, and braves what to her were the horrors of public-house visitation in order that she may know before she speaks. If she is interested in women's factory hours, she gathers from all over the world reports as to experience of factory legislation, she addresses questions carefully devised to employers and employed, she has interviews, finally, she goes out at the dead of night when the world is mostly sleeping, to see the women working at those very exceptional industries, where night work is not wholly prohibited.

Subjects which the papers show she herself investigated range from accidents to

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domestic servants and the employment of pauper girls on the one hand, to early trains for city girls and conditions of labour in mineral-water factories on the other; from the effect of factory legislation on women workers, to hairdressing as an occupation for women; from women in the printing trades, to cigarette and tooth-brush making; from artificial flower-making, to the alien problem in the East End; from facilities being given to women to use public baths, to the provision of rest-houses for girls employed at exhibitions. She took special care to ascertain what was being done abroad in every subject in which she was interested. Germany and America were the two countries which she knew most thoroughly outside our own dominions and with which she had the most voluminous and constant correspondence. Of her it can be said most truly that though her interests were far wider than most people's, she never spoke of anything, nor acted regarding anything, without first of all acquiring some first-hand knowledge concerning it.

She joined the Women's Industrial Council on its formation in 1894, and straight away became secretary of its Statistical

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Committee. This was work after her own heart, precise, definite, and involving a large foreign correspondence. She was also on the Investigations Committee from 1895 till 1907, and on the Education Committee for the same time. In 1907 she, with most of her active colleagues, had reason to resign from the Council. A small band of devoted women, united by the bonds of the most sincere personal friendship and by a common interest in improving the lot of women and children, had, for a dozen years, been doing work the value of which the country knows little.

A few of the inquiries conducted by the Investigations Committee upon which reports were issued will give an idea of the activities of this little group of women: occupations of pauper girls and women; accidents to domestic servants; homework in London; workwomen and cheap early trains; women in the printing trades; occupations of girls on leaving school; women's work in dust-yards; the housing of educated women in London; seasonal trades; charwomen; the tailoring trade; artificial flower-making; wholesale millinery; laundries; truck; the work of married women; vagrant children. Some of these



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investigations involved enormous labour, and the study of masses of reports. For the Education Committee she helped to investigate the condition of wage-earning school-children, and from this came the official inquiry of the Government, the subsequent legislation, and then the special committee which has done such good work, and of which she was an active member to the end—the Wage Earning Children's Committee. But the most substantial work done for education was in connection with the industrial training for girls.

I was approached once to become a member of the London School Board. "I was brought up on the School Board," she then said, "and if you bring School Board topics to my board and fireside I will leave you." But education was in her blood and she could not help herself. That was not the only reason why she was interested in the education of women, however. She knew that unless the whole mental outlook of the mass of wage-earning women was changed, no women's movement would be a success. It would always yield but a meagre harvest of good. She aimed at an industrial womanhood, skilled, conscious of its purpose, interested in its work—not a woman-

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hood that waited for marriage, and to whom every form of employment was casual and a mere biding for the time when something else was to happen. The power which the vote would bring, the liberty which legislative restrictions on women's labour would carry with it, would be but unused opportunities unless woman herself moved into a wider world of reality. One of the highways to that wider world was industrial education. The craftswoman was she who was to lead her sisters upwards, who was to demand just pay and fair conditions of labour, who was to come to political decisions guided by idealism and reason.

To a correspondent she wrote when her hands were full of this work in 1903: "I feel that the educational side and the skilled labour side are as important as, and even more difficult to work at than, that of the legal restrictions, where a good deal of the battle has been fought already. To fit girls in any station of life so that they train themselves for work is, and always will be, a problem, because of their marriage and home life responsibilities, but we have to peg away at it." She did peg away at it.

When the Technical Education Board began its work in London, it neglected the

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interests of women. The training of men was simple; classes in engineering, surveying, carpentry, plumbing, and so on, presented no difficulties except those of money, and of that the Technical Education Board had enough and to spare. Experiments were made in classes for the teaching of upholstery to women; the Board administered grants for apprenticeships in dressmaking given by city companies. There were the time-honoured classes in the domestic arts of cookery, and the genteel professions of typewriting and shorthand were looked after in numerous institutions. But of genuine industrial training there was next to nothing. Above all, there was no attempt to link up the elementary school to the workshop and the technical school, and an inquiry into what happened to girls when they left school revealed a terrible waste and ineffectiveness.

The committee of the Women's Industrial Council, acting with Women's Settlement committees, determined to alter this. Inquiries were made regarding the way in which day trade-schools were conducted abroad, and my wife went to Paris to see the schools there. The result was a proposal for a school at which trades should be taught in

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the afternoon, and more general education with a bearing upon the trades—drawing, designing, bookkeeping, and so on—should be given in the forenoon. Allied with my wife in this work was the late Mrs. Grace Oakeshott, who subsequently became an inspector of technical classes for women under the London County Council, and who, too, was cut off at the very height of her usefulness by a drowning accident on the coast of Brittany on August 27, 1907. The committee addressed an important memorandum to the Technical Education Board in June 1902, giving a list of trades which it had investigated, and indicating those which it thought should be the subject of classes.

In response to the pressure brought to bear upon it by these women earlier in that year, the Board had appointed in 1902 a committee to inquire into the technical instruction provided for women in London. Of that inquiry I was chairman, and we reported in October next year, recommending some important lines of advance. The responsible authorities and the staffs of institutions, those of the Borough Polytechnic in particular (where the first trade-school in London was opened for girls apprenticed

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to the tailoring trade, in October 1904), enthusiastically took up the cause, the two or three moving spirits of the Industrial Council kept up their pressure, and industrial classes for women sprung up.

It was hard and discouraging work, for the women came in small numbers at first. They had not been educated up to feeling the need of education. It had not been for them. Their unawakened minds were content to let the world jog on as it had jogged. But the handful of women behind the movement knew well what they were doing. They were not merely asserting the right of women to share the educational advantages of men; they were striving to create a new, enlightened, active, responsible womanhood enjoying the pleasures of initiative, independence, and self-power. This was clear from the important conference on the industrial training of women and girls held at the Guildhall, London, on October 6, 1908, over part of which my wife presided.

After her death, the lady superintendent of the Borough Polytechnic classes wrote: "At our last conference on skilled trades for women and girls I could not help feeling renewed regret for the great loss that all of us suffered in her death; and I vividly

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remembered her friendly but searching criticism of our endeavours, her wisdom in pointing out possible dangers, and throughout, from first to last, her genuine and sympathetic interest in our work."

Her connection with the Legal and Statistical Committee of the Council was marked by a special piece of work of great importance. Inspired by Mrs. Hogg, she, early in the eighteen-nineties, had begun to investigate the conditions of home-workers in Hoxton in particular. A good deal of picturesque writing had been published regarding them before. But it only dealt with the emotional and artistic side of this purgatory of ceaseless toil which had been regarded to be as inevitable as a result of a law of nature—something that had to be deplored, but that could not be cured. It was the only way in which the poor widow could bring up her child, in which the dutiful daughter could keep her bedridden father or mother from the workhouse, in which the unhappy wife could look after the broken-down husband. The sigh of pain which came from the heart of society was mingled with a prayer of thankfulness that God had made heroes in humble places. And there—with a little charity—the matter was allowed to rest.

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With heart and soul my wife entered upon a campaign against this iniquity, and of course her first care was to get at the facts. The investigations, in which several joined, were begun in 1895, and in 1897 the first report on *Home Industries in London*, an inquiry into thirty-five trades, appeared, and was followed by supplements in 1906 and 1908. She investigated several of the trades single-handed, and her work was done mostly in the north-east and east districts. It was no cold-blooded scientific mission upon which she went. She used to return laden in mind and spirit, as though she had been through the lands where Dante walked. No easy optimism saved her from being seared by what she saw. "To-day I have met women the latchet of whose shoes I am unworthy to loose," she would say; "and here I sit in happy comfort, and there they now are toiling, toiling, toiling without hope or brightness." * Of some of the women she then met she never lost sight. A visit or

* This murmur sounded throughout her life. One of her friends wrote that she never forgot how indignant my wife once was when as a child she saw a man with a little girl singing in Pembridge Square. "Why should not the little girl be as happy and as comfortable as I am?" she protested.

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a little gift kept her in contact with them whilst she lived. Of some she spoke when she was dying, and her great love and mercy still afford help to them.

But she never allowed her heart to blur her critical faculty. Her investigations never became slipshod because of her sympathy. She had the faculty of penetrating the untrue and the worthless by instinct. She never liked to be deceived and always took pains to guard against it, and in this investigation she tried to check by laborious correspondence and interviews what she was told by the workers themselves. But she was guided largely by an instinct that rarely played her false. Her likes and dislikes were generally rapidly formed and she rarely had to revise them.

The question, however, was, what was to be done to remedy this state of things? She never believed in simple cures for great social diseases. These were the days before Old Age Pensions, but she saw that they would help considerably; insurance against invalidity had not been thought of in this country, but she saw that that would assist; she had no love of Poor Law methods, but she thought that widows left with children might well receive public

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assistance whilst the young ones required a guardian. She recognised, however, that the evil was wider than any of its details and its specific causes. Society was tolerating the conditions which gave rise to it. Overcrowding, slums, the excessive labour of children, the sacrifice of health and life, were frankly permitted, because the rights of property — including the property of parents in children, which in so many cases is all that is meant by the much vaunted "rights of parents"—seemed to involve it. In other words, society perpetuated this kind of poverty because it was unintelligently sympathetic towards the victims. The wells at which the people were drinking were poisoned—but, still, the poor things must have water somehow.

She was convinced that homework had to be destroyed altogether—not at a swoop, not by an Act of Parliament, not perhaps in our day. She was equally convinced that it could not be dealt with by a frontal attack. Its commercial utility had to be destroyed at the same time as provisions had to be made for incomes for those who had to depend on fireside industry. "It is like modern preventive medicine," she once said. "We have to put into the social

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system germs that will prey upon those making for disease."

When we were in America in 1897, we spent some time looking into the operation of a system of licences granted to home-workers in Boston. An inspector took us round and we visited many licensed rooms. The nose as well as the eye aided us in concluding that the system would be beneficial if applied here. It would lead to an improvement in the dwellings of the people, it would eliminate the casual and spasmodic homeworker, it would discourage an increase in the numbers of these workers, it might even raise wages indirectly by protecting the homeworker against the competition of the casual. And so, in 1898, the Women's Industrial Council agreed to promote a Bill providing for the licensing of dwelling-places where work was done. Colonel Denny, member for Kilmarnock, introduced it. It provided that work should be given out to be done in dwelling-places only if these places had been inspected and licensed by a factory inspector. The factory inspector was chosen as the licensing authority because sanitary inspectors were so often under the thumb of the very people whom they would have to prosecute,

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and the local health authorities had neglected disgracefully their duties under the factory and workshops law.

Year after year the Bill was brought into the House of Commons, but the Home Office, supine and slow as it generally is about industrial matters, could not see how the certificates were to be granted, although some of the ablest factory inspectors were advising privately that there were no difficulties at all in the way. The Home Office official prevailed, and one has only to visit the homes of the homeworkers still, to learn what was lost by the failure to carry the Bill through Parliament. The Bill had considerable effect, however, in stirring up local health authorities and it gave leverage for the agitation for an increase in women sanitary inspectors.* Few Bills that have never become Acts of Parliament have had such potent influence as this.

The problems of homework were gradually absorbed in those of sweating, and were all lost sight of save that of wages. At this time, probably no one knew personally so

* Even as late as 1906 a Return given by the Home Office on my motion showed that one-fourth of the Medical Officers of the United Kingdom sent no report to the Home Office on inspection of workshops done under the Factory and Workshops Act, though all ought to do so.

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many homeworkers engaged in all kinds of industries as she did, and when the Sweating Exhibition was held in Queen's Hall in May 1906, she provided most of the homeworkers who were to show an interested public what they worked at and the conditions under which they did it. She never believed much in the Australian method of determining wages by courts, and Wages Boards did not find support from her. She laid her hands upon everything she could dealing with Wages Boards, and she was not convinced. She searched out Australians and New Zealanders who were here on a visit and questioned them on the subject, and finally, seeing that the proposal was to become a matter of practical politics, and in her anxiety to be quite sure that she had all the available facts guiding her in forming her conclusions, she began to discuss a visit to Australia and New Zealand. She anticipated that, once Wages Boards were established in sweated trades, a mental change would take place which would influence future legislation, and perhaps inaugurate a distinct epoch in our industrial politics. She therefore determined to try to see the whole Australian system at work, from Arbitration Courts on

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the one hand, to Wages Boards on the other. This she did in the autumn of 1906. The work done during these two months in Australia and New Zealand was prodigious. Official reports were devoured, annotated, abstracted; inspectors were cross-examined; workpeople were interviewed; arbitrators seen; Courts and Boards visited whilst sitting; manufacturers questioned. She returned more convinced than ever that what she had seen and heard would be a mistaken policy if applied here. She sighed for the simple industrial conditions of Australia; she was intensely interested in the experiments, but they did not win her approval as a model for ourselves. She gave evidence, adverse to Wages Boards, before the Select Committee of the House of Commons.

She did not believe that Wages Boards would fix a wage which would be anything above an improved form of sweating, and she thought that this method of advancing wages would delude us into a pursuit of high nominal wages only and not high real wages. She thought that even a partially successful attempt to raise the wages of sweated workers by such direct means as Wages Boards' decisions,

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whilst everything else remained the same, would deprive the homeworker of her work instead of help her to better things. She pointed out the great difficulties of its accurate administration. Apart from these considerations she took her stand upon the economic position that a mere raising of wages by some outside authoritative decree did not necessarily improve the conditions of the worker, but led to secondary industrial changes the sum total of the effects of which would not necessarily spell out working-class progress. "The wages of labour can be increased economically only by reducing the burdens which labour unnecessarily bears," she wrote, in the course of the controversy. "Sweating conditions are part of the disorganisation which exists on the margins of industry, and arise from many sources, each one of which must be dealt with in detail and at the same time all co-ordinated in an economic policy which will bring into operation moral and economic influences favouring a better distribution of wealth." She thought that if homeworkers had to take out a certificate as she proposed, the casual nature of their work would be struck at and the operation of supply and demand would improve their position.

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When the Wages Boards were ultimately established, she watched their decisions with sympathetic interest; the miserable wage standards which they were setting up only proved that her fears regarding them were too true, but she admitted that once this line of advance was entered upon it would have to be pursued as there would be no going back upon it. Three or four years, she thought, would have to elapse before the effects of the experiment could be gauged. She was planning a visit to Cradley Heath when illness overtook her; when the railway trouble, which had a direct bearing upon this question, was at its height, she was lying cut off from the affairs of the vanishing world; she was dead when the Mines Minimum Wage Bill was hustled through Parliament. Once she said, with a whimsical smile: "When the last Wages Board will have given its last decision, we shall still have to go upon the housetops and shout with Marx: 'Workers of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains.'" So far, events seem to be justifying her prophecies.

Another crusade on behalf of the woman

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worker was inaugurated by her through the Statistical and Legal Committee. When the agitation of the unemployed gained some success in 1903–04, and the Unemployed Workmen Act was passed in 1905 after the Central Unemployed Body for London had been formed by Mr. Walter Long, then President of the Local Government Board, she asked: "What is to be done for women?" and the answer was in varied terms: "Nothing!" Some said there was no unemployment amongst women, others that their work was such that no assistance could be given to them. That was not good enough for her.

As usual, her first step was to find out the facts. She compiled an elaborate series of questions, which were sent with letters to 1,785 local authorities, to trade unions that had women members, and to some hundreds of private correspondents, particularly those working at missions, in girls' clubs, girls' homes, and similar places. She also undertook investigations on her own account. The result was that she drafted a memorandum which was presented by deputation to the Central Body in London, and sent to unemployed committees all over the country. The memorandum proposed



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the setting up of workrooms for unemployed women, where they could go, as men went to Hollesley Bay or to levelling work in the parks, and the establishment in some suitable place of a training farm where women—especially young widows with children—could be taught small-holding work suitable to their tastes and strength, such as bee-keeping, vegetable culture, and small fruit farming. Her idea was that this farm should be the entrance-gate to a system of small holdings which Mr. Long had in mind when he supported the establishment of the Hollesley Bay Colony —a scheme which, to the irreparable loss of the country, was subsequently knocked on the head by the Local Government Board. In order to give the memorandum a backing she assisted in organising the march of unemployed women to Whitehall on November 6, 1905.

She was always stoutly opposed to managing these schemes as though they were relief works, for that, she knew, would only bring ruin in its train. Several places were inspected with a view to starting the farm, but official opposition was too great. Carefully planned scientific experiments are just what the Local Government

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Board will not tolerate. It has been a department of social pathology, not of social amelioration, and with masterly negations it fulfils its functions.

The Central Body, owing to these representations, did, however, appoint a Women's Work Committee, and women's workrooms were opened. I was then a member of the Body representing the Local Government Board, and was appointed chairman of the Committee. Its work was unwillingly accepted, and entangling thorns were put in its way from the beginning. The spirit of relief works was forced upon it persistently. Before many months were over, it was forbidden to dispose of its articles even on special markets which could not by any possibility affect the ordinary mechanism of supply; it was not allowed to give gifts; it was told if it could not pay it would have to be closed. The ultimata were not couched in this plain language, but that was their effect under the conditions in which we had to work.

Hundreds of women who were bread-winners and whose cases had, first of all, been carefully investigated, were helped there, were taught tidiness, were shown how to mend and darn, and a new standard

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of comfort and domestic efficiency was made possible to them. That, in addition to the mere temporary money help to those who were unemployed, was part of the original intention. "The training in good work which some of these women have received in the workrooms has been as valuable as the actual money wages in time of need," she told the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws.

When the Labour Exchanges were opened she wanted to link them up with these workrooms, and she arranged that a deputation should wait upon the Director and General Manager of the Exchanges to bring her project before them. The memorandum submitted was in three sections. The first asked that safeguards should be taken lest women be employed at sweating wages through the exchanges; the second urged that attending the women's workshops should be accepted as proof that the women were anxious to work; the third was that, as women had in a number of cases obtained good employment as a result of the training given by the workshops, a certificate of the manager should be accepted as evidence of skill.

In order to give the project support

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through local committees she joined the Distress Committees of Westminster and Holborn (of the latter of which she was a member at her death), and in order that she might follow every detail of the work-rooms themselves she joined the committee which managed the St. Pancras workroom.

But the task became heartless. The experiment was doomed in places which have the power to see that death always follows condemnation. Familiar obstacles were raised. Women should not be taught to be breadwinners; husbands ought not to be encouraged to look to their wives for the family income; and so on. The proposal and the scheme never had a chance of success. Those who planned it and wished to work it were thwarted at every turn.

In October 1907 the Women's Industrial Council, on her initiative, called a national conference on the unemployment of women depending upon their own earnings, which was attended by 500 delegates, over 1,100 having applied for credentials. Half had to be refused because the Guildhall was not large enough to hold them. At this conference she was responsible for stating the case against systematic overtime.

In January 1909 she organised a re-

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markable demonstration in the Memorial Hall, but the pressure of unemployment was for the time being released, an indifferent public turned away tired to find other emotional recreations, and those who longed to do something that would be permanent had also to turn away sad at heart.

In 1907 she prepared and presented to the Royal Commission on the Poor Law a memorandum on unemployment amongst women which is not only a monument to her careful search for fact, but a summary of remedial proposals to which we shall have to turn for guidance as soon as the cry of the unemployed is raised again in our public places. It begins with a survey of the distress due to unemployment, and covers numbers of industries, the information having all been collected first hand. The immediate causes of distress are the seasonal and shifting character of so many women's trades, the displacement of labour by machinery, the removal of firms, the recent war, the competition of women driven to seek some work owing to the unemployment of their husbands, and the general slackness of trade at the time. She thinks that women have not been treated fairly under the Unemployed Work-

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men Act, and reiterates her belief in training both girls at schools and unemployed women in workshops like those she had been instrumental in starting; she "deprecates" emigration as a remedy, but hopes for something from shorter hours of work and the abolition of overtime; she reiterates her favour for experiments with farming, especially as regards women with children, and wives of men who might find employment in the country. She finishes with a recommendation of which she spoke a great deal, that widows with children and wives with sick husbands should not be driven into industry for the maintenance of the young and the ailing, but that the State should board out their charges with themselves, and see they are properly looked after.

One more crusade I must mention. Her interest in women was not that of one who took sides in sex rivalry. Woman to her was something sacred, something different in essence from man. The woman was the mother, and, to her, motherhood contained everything that was redemptive, everything that was holy. The mother with the infant at her breast always re-

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ceived her homage and her worship. Deeply as she deplored the legal, the political, and the social disabilities and insults heaped upon women, bitterly as she resented the acquiescence of most women in a régime of sexual subordination as shown in nothing more eloquently than in women's dress especially on high occasions, she held that woman's work in life was different from man's; she believed that only by doing that work could woman fulfil her destiny and attain to her maximum liberty, and she never budged from this anchorage in considering what political and social programmes she would support.

It appears antiquated, but she never held to the doctrine in an antiquated spirit. She was a modern of moderns, but she withheld her support from movements of women conducted in the spirit of men. "That is not the way to victory," she said. "Just as I cannot translate into English the emotions which you express in your Scots tongue, so women cannot translate into manliness the emotions which are theirs alone." She was fond of making that point clear by showing how totally different in essence, not merely in manifestation, was the militancy of women suffragists compared

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with the revolutionism of men. She was at several meetings when they were interrupting, and her criticism was: "I cannot forget their hatpins; if they were men, I could not forget their fists." *

This explanation is necessary here in order that her position regarding barmaids may be understood. She had often been struck with the real purpose of those who employed barmaids in hotels and public houses. She began to buy copies of the leading organs of the trade, and carefully watched the advertisements. Blue-books, official reports, magistrates' opinions, doctors' views were consulted and sought, and the results marshalled. But above all the actual effects upon the women themselves were investigated.† The compiled record was

* It is interesting to note that amongst her correspondence are some letters written in 1908 warmly defending some remarks she had made holding up to ridicule the idea that a woman ought not to take her husband's name on marriage.

† At one meeting she addressed she presented her case in the usual careful way from a quiver full of the weightiest facts and arguments. But, half jocularly, she said that whilst riding on the top of an omnibus she could see the inside of public houses. This solitary sentence was sent round by a news agency as the sole report of her speech. Instantly this was seized upon by the hostile Press. "This is how these busybodies gain their information," was the burden of numerous comments. She wrote to a corre-

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one of vulgarity, assault, murder, suicide. Two conclusions forced themselves upon her. The first was that women were preferred to men because they were cheap; the second that women were used simply as decoys to increase the sale of drink and to make bars places of social resort. The barmaids had to be good-looking; photographs as a rule had to be sent with applications for situations; they had to dress attractively; in every respect they had to be enticing.

She raised the question at the National Union of Women Workers in 1902, and with some friends formed the Barmaids' Committee which published *Women as Barmaids* (1905). She always disclaimed the idea that barmaids must of necessity be bad; she contended that the conditions of their employment were full of grave risk. So the purpose of the book was to present a sociological study of the profession. Nearly one-half of the 27,707 barmaids were between the ages of twenty and twenty-five, two-thirds were between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five. Of 850 advertisements

spondent: "Of course the complaint about me is quite justified if that were *all* I said in support of my views. But one gets accustomed to these wretched newspapers picking out one sentence that catches their ear and sending that round by itself."

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for barmaids in the official trade newspaper, 220 stipulated that applicants must not be over twenty. I remember how sadly she pondered over those figures when she was working at them. She was like a knight hearing for the first time of the Minotaur and the offerings of beautiful youth sent to him. The degradation of womanhood was proved up to the hilt, and as the circumstances of the trade were such that this degradation must always exist, she ranged herself against reform and in favour of abolition, bowing, however, as she always did, to the necessities, and proposing that the abolition should be gradual.

The trade defended itself against the cutting off of such a valuable asset as the barmaid, and formed various defence associations in the name of the women themselves; but though, of course, the barmaids could not come out into the light of day, many of them wrote to her encouraging letters giving her facts regarding their experiences.

"I had a very sad visit yesterday," she wrote to a friend on April 18, 1908, "from a girl who has been three months at a Brixton railway bar, and has left it in disgust and ill-health. . . . Both physically

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and morally she dislikes it, and is a nervous wreck, poor girl, at eighteen."

She defended her committee and herself in the *Times* and elsewhere; deputations to wait upon the Home Secretary were got up; discussions were arranged. Ultimately, the Government dropped the barmaids' clause from the ill-fated Licensing Bill, although it only gave justices power to "make conditions regarding the employment of barmaids," and a Bill introduced by Mr. Gooch, then the member for Bath, making no headway, to this day the good looks and dash of women remain a valuable asset to the liquor trade. And they are dirt cheap.

Her attitude to two separate classes of argument which she had to meet in this controversy shows her general attitude to the facts of life. There was the argument that the woman behind the bar was a civilising agency. She knew far too much to admit the fact, but if it had been true, she said, it only showed what a vulgar thing much of our modern civilisation is. Tolerate this because the times are evil, because there are poor men who are benefited by calling some girl by her Christian name (an argument that was actually used),

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and the times will get more evil and the vulgarities that will console your next generation will get more gross. The other argument was that no avenue of employment should be closed to women. This was supported from certain quarters by statements of the most preposterous nature regarding the number of women employed. These she quietly knocked on the head by reference to her inseparable companions, the Blue-books.

But even had the figures been right it would have made no difference to her. If we have ever to take into account the quality of employment offered to people, we must do so as regards women. A trade which only asked for the use of women's good looks and youth offered no employment for women at all. "It is not a question of adult women choosing a profession for life," she wrote, "but of girls lured into a trade that will throw them out soon." It was a calling of sex, and against that every sentiment of her being protested. She would never sacrifice the future to the present, eternity to time. Rather than relieve by one ounce the pressure of women upon employment by putting women's womanhood upon the market in any form,

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from the grossness of the streets to the seductiveness of the bars (she never attacked barmaids for being immoral—she always defended them against such an accusation *), she argued: "Let us face the real problems of how to make women useful in the world and of how to enable them to gain, by their own services, their share in the world's wealth, but do not let us imagine that we are doing anything to open doors for the woman wage-earner when we offer her opportunities to make an income because her youth and good looks and the way she does up her hair are attractive and so induce men to become clients of her employer." The turning of womanhood into an economic asset was not, to her mind, a way to increase the employment of women.

In one of the letters she wrote to the *Times* (February 18, 1908) she replied to the short-sighted people who thought otherwise, by emphasising two considerations that are unassailable: "The fact is that there are no greater enemies of an improved

* A woman had written a letter to the Press attacking the barmaids themselves and she wrote to a friend on her Committee: "Do you think I can write and protest against this? The last sentence is horrible. It is shoving the poor things down in the mud and slime with a vengeance. What right has she to talk like that?"

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standard of women's work than those who defend unskilled, low-paid, unhealthy, or otherwise undesirable work on the ground that women can be got to do it, and that no barrier should be placed in the way of their doing anything under any circumstances for a living. The efficient, highly paid, and self-respecting woman worker will only become general after it has become infinitely more difficult than it now is for a girl or woman to earn a subsistence at unhealthy, casual, and unskilled forms of employment."

Still, she insisted that the abolition must come gradually, but on a definite plan. Writing to the *Times* on February 7, 1903, she said: "It is essential that any action taken should be gradual in order to be successful. Many thousands of women are employed in serving intoxicating liquors in the United Kingdom; in London alone the 1901 census returns give the number of barmaids as 7,832; in the county of Lancashire there are 2,747. The nature of the work is such that those employed in it find difficulty in settling into other occupations if they leave it, and it would obviously be a hardship to turn those in any given locality out of work without long notice.

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It is to meet this difficulty that our committee suggest that notice should be given for a certain period, such as five years, during which a large proportion of those already employed would in the ordinary course of events have married or left their employment for various reasons and the others would be able to look for fresh work; and that, meanwhile, no new *employées* should be engaged." And again: "It is the never-ending procession of young innocent girls through the bars that we want to stop."

But our public has really little regard for its women, and we have been passing through some years of darkness on women's questions, partly owing to a strange revival of a century-old individualist conception of women's rights. Pressed by the trade and pressed by the women who insist upon the dross and the gold of their "rights" being given them together, this crusade too was baffled. Its triumph awaits the wider and the deeper demands of womanhood which must be satisfied if we are to attain to that complete co-operation between manhood and womanhood upon which moral progress depends.

But in the meantime she was consoled

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by the fact that, partly by her prompting, the South Australian Legislature prohibited the employment of barmaids in 1908.

There was a large question of political and industrial policy behind this controversy. What was the effect upon women of legislation imposing special restrictions upon their labour presumably in the general interest of the community, because considerations had to be taken into account regarding women which did not apply to men? Round this a furious discussion raged for some years. A kind of individualist school claimed that woman should be allowed to make the most of the opportunities which the industrial market offered her, and this school, later on, had the support of some of the feminists, who, without committing themselves to the individualist view, held that until women were enfranchised, the State should not exercise its functions regarding them. With neither of these sections had my wife any sympathy. She was not an individualist and in the history of the past century found no support for those individualist contentions; she was never influenced by proposals to stop the doing of one good until another has been done. "True freedom for women,"



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she said, "is not the freedom to earn *any* wage under *any* conditions," and "I see no reason to wait until I can wipe out two blacks before I wipe out one."

She went further and held that if an incursion of unorganised women into the workshops threatened to lower the general standard of men and of the nation generally, men were perfectly justified in resisting such an incursion. Passages from a lecture which she delivered on this subject are before me as I write. She defined liberty to be not only the quantity but the quality of human opportunity, and held that to secure the maximum of both, economic laws had to be controlled by the national will expressing itself through legislation. When law fails to protect the weak, slavery begins. But, it was argued, special legislation lowers women's wages and throws women out of work, thus undoing with one hand the good it is trying to do with the other. To settle whether this is so or not upon mere theory is vain. It necessitates an appeal to facts, and the facts are all against the supposition. "We have had laws restricting hours of women's work now in operation since 1844, so that we can look to experience on these points. Since then the number of women in

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outside employment has immensely increased in proportion to the female population. In manufactures alone women increased from 463,600 in 1841, to 1,447,500 in 1891—more than trebled. Many new employments have been opened to women. Changes in the conditions of trade have been made so that the increase is not shared by all, even of the largest occupations. The two industries which show the greatest decrease within the last ten years (census 1881–91) are the most absolutely unregulated—domestic service and agriculture. There is evidently no turning women out of work by legislation. Individual cases there may have been, indeed must have been, for no reform is ever wrought without individual hardship; but even those who are looking specially for them seem to find it surprisingly difficult to produce detailed cases. As for whether or not more women would have been employed in certain trades if there had not been restrictions, it is of course impossible to get exact proof one way or the other. The compositors' trade is often instanced as the one where this is most likely to be the case, but here we find that whereas at the time the law was passed hardly any firms em-

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ployed women compositors, now there are a great many who do so. Women are not employed anywhere in setting up daily papers, and this has sometimes been put down to their inability to work at night, but we find that none are employed in evening paper work, which is done in the daytime, and the explanation given is that there is too much rush and strain, and—alas that I should have to say it—too much skill needed in the work for it to be suitable to them.

"Then, as to lowering of wages. As a whole, women's wages have gone up since the time of the first Factory Acts, though they are deplorably low now. In the trades which have been longest and most carefully regulated, *e.g.* textile industries, women's wages have risen most. If we want to instance the most horribly low pay, we have to go to the home industries, where hours are absolutely unlimited and where we find a sort of average pay of 1*d.* or 2*d.* an hour. In fact, the absence of limitation of hours is the very thing which the greedy or careless employer uses to screw more work out of his workers for the same pay, or to let his work be so disorganised that the women waste hours doing nothing and then make

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up by overtime. This kind of overdriving most effectually lowers wages, for it exhausts the workers and renders them unfit for their work, and then they either become ill and stay away or have to accept lower pay. The real reason why shorter hours, of course within limits, do not mean, whether for men or women, that the workers do less work or get less pay is, that proper time for rest and recreation ensures better work. The individual employer may be able to afford to overwork his workers and then cast them off for new ones who cost him nothing, but even for him it is really a bad bargain, and for the worker and the community I need not point out its harmfulness."

If women are kept out of work by special legislation, however, it would not be the last word, for if women can remain in work only when conditions are bad, are we justified in keeping the general standard of work low? No; we are not; we must impose a minimum of well-being. Degrading conditions of work are as likely to bring evil moral results as no work at all. She could not "endorse the short-sighted policy which lets a woman do for 10*s*. what a man will not do for less than 25*s*., on the plea

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that anything is better than nothing. A bad thing is worse than nothing." These are hard things to say, and individuals here and there may be injured by following them out, but in the mass and in the long run they are absolutely true. And she was always thinking of the mass and in the long run.

As an illustration of what she is driving at, she tells of a friend of hers who, a few days before, had worked in a laundry from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., and who at the end of the day fainted and was unable to resume work for some days. Then she boldly attacks the claim put forward by some of her opponents that men and women should have equal treatment by being made subject to exactly the same code of industrial law. "You cannot impose upon men a period when they must not work before and after child-birth." That must apply to women only. And that is only typical. A woman is not a man, and society has not only the right but the duty to legislate for women in relation to her characteristic functions. Thus she is discovered in the end standing on the bedrock of womanhood upon which she built all her theories. Woman is woman, and the revolt against her servitude (with which she was in unqualified sympathy)

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must not be misled by spokeswomen who assumed that equality between her and man has to be discovered and maintained on the assumption that that equality means sameness. The natural differences between them involved legal and industrial differences. She always stuck to that.

It was her desire to see finished a thorough investigation into the work done by women in this country, the results of which were to be published in a series of volumes. Only one appeared, *Women in the Printing Trades* —published in 1904. A well-trained band of investigators had been brought together, and a second section of this work was being pushed ahead in the form of an investigation into the work of married women, when practically the whole of the active spirits of the Women's Industrial Council left it. The completion of the work fell into other hands and the supervision of the investigation also passed over to others. Her labours in that connection were over. She hoped that they would begin again when certain pressing matters had been dealt with. The friends with whom she had co-operated for years were ready for new explorations. Some were talked over. But time hurries us ruthlessly on. Work once dropped can-

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not be taken up again, for every day brings its own fulness. There are no vacant moments awaiting a task. Besides, the sands in her glass were running low, and whilst she planned, the shadow of death was falling upon her.

The other society through which she did much work was the National Union of Women Workers.

In 1896 she was elected to the executive of this Union; that year she was appointed secretary of its Industrial Committee and two years later, chairman—an office which she held at her death; then in the latter year she became secretary to its Legislation Committee and held this office until 1910. When the Congress of the International Council of Women was held in London, under the auspices of the National Union, she was the convener of the Industrial Section of the Congress.

The Union was not a propagandist body in the ordinary sense of the term. It was formed in order that women working in every field should be kept in touch with each other and that through its committees and branches the general interests of women might be guarded and promoted.

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Its work was delightfully varied; its members included all types of women busy with the affairs of the world, and were representative of all political parties, all philanthropic and public work, all women's allegiances. She was devoted to the Union—not only because she was devoted to some of its active members personally, but because the idea of people co-operating in the real work of life who are divided by the phrases and the labels and the different social status which separate men (and still more women) was one after her own heart. The secretary to the Council wrote when she died: "Mrs. MacDonald occupied quite a unique position amongst us inasmuch as she was always able to enlist the help of working women to speak for us." She was a link between the divided sections of society.

In connection with the two committees with which she was most closely associated, she issued to the branches of the Union letters and circulars innumerable, giving information to them about Parliamentary Bills, Acts, projects; suggesting amendments, deputations, considerations; guiding them regarding local administration. These letters show a fine grasp of public business. I know with what scrupulous care she avoided

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in them everything like party views. That was specially difficult in her case, because when one has thought out one's political position as she did, the impartial survey is apt to become the party survey, for the party survey then is itself the only rational and moral survey.

The subjects which she advanced through these committees of the Union are legion: rural housing, leadless glaze, the registration of midwives and of nurses, courts for children, police court matrons, women probation officers, medical inspection and feeding of school children, restaurants for women workers, women's enfranchisement, early closing of shops, the hours of florists; and every Bill of any importance to women which came before the House of Commons during those years was studied by her and made the subject of a report. Her last efforts were spent in getting better terms for women under the Insurance Bill. Every Monday during the Session a list is issued to Members of Parliament showing the title of every Bill before the House and the stage it has reached. This was her special perquisite. She watched these lists week by week and got copies of every Bill which affected women, or which had a

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bearing upon public morals. It is impossible to set a just value upon the work she did during those years. She guided hundreds of women in their industrial interests, she taught them the importance of public work of a robust kind, she awakened them to their responsibilities in the State, and introduced them to a higher politics than partisan balderdash; above all, she revealed to them the knowledge, the rectitude, and the sagacity of one who was a Socialist, and so reduced the mass of blinding prejudice in the world.

On all these subjects she delivered numerous lectures and wrote equally numerous articles. She edited the Industrial Section of the *Englishwoman's Year Book* as a labour of love and wrote most of it herself for the issues from 1899 to 1909. Her lectures and articles both were addressed to the serious mind. They were not embroidered; they were solid and substantial material, the products of wide and accurate inquiry and painstaking thinking. The latter are mostly buried away in the *Women's Industrial News*, the organ of the Women's Industrial Council, between the years 1897 and 1910—the first being on the subject of *Regulation of Home Work in France*, and the last explaining

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and criticising the Indian Factory Bill. A goodly number were anonymous. She wrote with some difficulty. Had she had a readier pen the vast stores of accurate information which she had at her command might have found a much larger constituency. Papers read by her to the Economic and Education Sections of the British Association, of which she was a life member, are typical of the literary work which she did. The first, on *The Industrial Effects of Legislation for Women*, was read at Bradford in 1900, two others on *The Education of Wage Earners of School Age*, and *Some Recent Investigations in Home Work*, at York in 1906, a fourth on *Day Trade Schools for Girls*, at Leicester in 1907. As a result of the first paper a committee of inquiry, upon which she was appointed (the first woman, I believe, to have a place on these British Association committees), was created, and after sitting for three years it issued a valuable report which still remains the best examination of the whole subject.

A long catalogue of much work like this rather hints that the worker was merely a well-polished machine whose innumerable products were of the mechanical order. That was not the case at all. She crammed her

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mind full of facts, but the facts were all strung on idealism and grouped in human patterns. The paper she read on Housing at the Brighton Conference of the National Union of Women Workers in 1900 comes first to my hand, and it will show what I mean. It is full of facts, full of references to the state of the law as it then was, full of information as to its administration, but here is the spirit of it: "The human soul is even more sensitive to dark and sordid surroundings than the human body. With children this sensitiveness is specially evident. It is a scientific fact, as well as a poetic simile, that their natures expand in fresh air and sunshine as the flowers do. Yet there are hundreds and thousands of little children growing up in places where no flower could blossom. When I pass through a district of working-class streets, I always feel an affectionate gratitude to the ugly school-buildings which stand up here and there amongst the houses, because I know that there at least the children pass some hours of the day in rooms which have big windows and high ceilings, space on the walls to hang bright pictures, and a few spare feet of floor to walk about on without knocking

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against the furniture. . . . We want some picturesqueness, some individuality, to raise us above the mechanical routine of our modern commercial life. In the mediæval towns, where the workmen were not mechanical drudges, but artists taking a pride and interest in the work of their hands, the very lines of roof and wall in their domestic architecture breathed forth their love of beauty and spirituality. There is no such inspiration about our artisans' houses nowadays. They look as if they had all been turned out of a machine—every line is straight, every angle is hard. There is no imagination, no uplifting; dead utility stares you in the face from the doors as it does from a dog's kennel. . . . The philosophy is shallow which says that circumstances make the man, but that which says that character is independent of circumstance is equally shallow, and certainly more pernicious. The method which will give us the best results is a union of ideal morality and practical social reform. As our cathedrals, built by the spirit of religion, now aid us in receiving a revelation of that spirit, so the house built to satisfy the public conscience will teach to the individual virtue and to the citizen duty." Elsewhere she

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wrote: "To work for the economic independence of women is to work for the purity of family life"; and again: "I am interested in housing because I am interested in homing. I want houses for souls as well as for bodies."

Largely because she could not bear the very thought of being nothing but a smart machine she detested such words as "experts." "Then do please avoid the word 'expert,'" she wrote. "I shall not lecture for you again if you call me one. I have been having a row with —— about it lately, and I believe she wishes she had never used the word about herself." That vocabulary did not suit her mind. To illustrate the expert she took great delight in telling a story of a certain lady who, though a Socialist, was in favour of the South African War. To a friend she was setting forth her views as an expert upon the government of the future in relation to the war. "But," the innocent one urged, "is there no moral consideration at all?" "There may be," was the reply, "but upon that the experts are divided, and it is not my subject." "If it be not exactly true," she would say, "it is the kind of story that can be told truthfully in heaven by the

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angels who see the thoughts and motives of mankind as though they were actual events."

"I used to hope that if I did not marry," she wrote to a friend, "I would be able to spend the affection I would give to husband and children on a wider circle; you are certainly doing that most wonderfully." The fact is, the affection she gave to husband and children she also gave to her social work. It was like a child to her. She fondled it, she went to it to share with it, as it were, both her joy and her sorrow.

On the threshold of her active life she wrote in her journal that when she thought of what some people were doing she was humiliated and put to shame, because she found it so difficult to live a useful life, and she prayed that work might be put in her way. She was like a servant in the market place begging to be hired. How fully did she fulfil her desires! "How you get through all you do," wrote one of her friends, "is a perfect marvel to us." "How she found time for so many activities in so many spheres must remain a wonder," says the writer of the annual report of the British Association for Labour Legislation for 1911–12. "Whatsoever thy hand

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findeth to do, do it with thy might," was a text which greeted her when she rose and comforted her when she went to rest, and yet but rarely did she seem to be overdone. The pressure of never-ceasing work never destroyed her serenity either of mind or demeanour. She was never breathless, never fussy, never apparently hurried. "She did more in her day than any woman I have ever known, but she always seemed to have plenty of time. If she knew a friend to be ill, or wanting her, she was never too full up to visit her, and the visits were never short or 'rushy.' It was because of this that her bright personality brought so much relief to suffering,"—wrote one with whom she had done much work. Only during the last year of her life, when she was ill and bowed down with much grief, did the busy machinery of life seem occasionally to catch her in its wheels. To the editor of the *Women's Labour League Leaflet* she once had to write: "Thank you for trimming my pars. up. I had a committee at the Shoreditch Technical Institute after I left you which lasted from 7.30 to 10.30—fifteen candidates to interview for two posts. So I am afraid I was rather lumpy and sleepy after I got home." Her



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method, her clearness of thought, her ease of mind, her faculty of concentration, her thriftiness of time, her neglect of the unessentials of life, enabled her to fill every moment with some fruitful thought or act. "They wonder why I do so much," she said. "There is no miracle in it. I waste so little." But the affections were perhaps too eager, the desire to do was too keen. She gave much in proof of her love, but above all she gave herself.

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## *Chapter VII*

# POLITICS

A SEPARATE chapter must be given to her purely political activities and views. For politics as such she latterly came to care nothing. Mr. Gladstone was a hero in her girlish eyes, but for no purely political cause except Home Rule had she enthusiasm. The freemasonry of spirit which bound her to her colleagues in the Socialist movement and made her a friend with them all, gave their meetings something of the fraternity of the early Christian communities, but it was not the freemasonry of political agreement.

Both in order to show what she was, and to correct some erroneous statements that have been made about her ambitions, I may state that she regretted rather than welcomed Parliamentary distinctions. The Quaker spirit of her Puritanism reigned supreme over this aspect of work. When the newspapers used to announce with a confidence



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equalled only by their inaccuracy that I was designed for office, and her friends congratulated her, she used to say that political necessity alone would ever cause such a thing to happen, and when it did, she would be a most unhappy woman. The same thing happened when events compelled me most unwillingly to allow myself to be elected Chairman of the Labour Party. Honour as such had no attractions for her; office—even office in my own party—seemed to her to hamper liberty and limit usefulness. "Office creates its own work. We want to make public opinion; you will be worried with troublesome pettifogging matters as Chairman." She accepted the inevitable like a martyr; she did not welcome it in pride. "It is our destiny," she said, and tears filled her eyes. "I am not really opposed to it, but the burden is very heavy, and one wants peace and happiness in work."

Indeed, that feeling influenced her attitude to Parliament itself. She shared the general enthusiasm which marked the rise of the Labour Party. Writing of the Trade Union Congress which she attended at Leicester in 1903, she said: "The enthusiasm and earnestness for Labour Representation are

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most marked. One feels as if at last one could almost see the masses becoming articulate and determined to look after themselves and improve themselves by united action instead of grumbling about what the people they elect, who have other points of view from themselves, do or don't do." She was convinced that that City of God in which her soul lived, and which she was trying to build up in the world as an abode for other souls, had to be created dwelling upon dwelling, street upon street, by Parliament, amongst other things, and after our Party appeared on its benches in 1906, she took special delight in coming and looking down upon us from the lofty perch where ladies sit. She was absorbed in scores of causes and reforms, and consequently no one had better reason to know how powerful the letter, the nod, the wink of a Member of Parliament was.

But as time went on she felt the difficulty of working in Parliament and in the country at the same time. The solitary evenings were long, and she felt their loneliness, but that she accepted as a lady accepted the absence of her knight in the wars; the absorption of time, energy, health and strength in the weary plodding of Parlia-

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mentary action was more grievous still. One got tired just in making the machine move at all. Above all she was appalled when she discovered how easy it was to undo what had been built up by years of patient toiling, and how the most absurd revolts found passionate followers. She used to say that she never understood Moses and the Children of Israel until 1906. But one of her steadfast characteristics was to accept the conditions of progress given to her and use them to the best advantage. That was another result of her Puritanism and a consequence of her belief in an active Divinity.

The part of public agitation which she least liked was its unfairness. She could detest a thing wholeheartedly, but she never could misrepresent it, and partisanship—including Labour partisanship—she would not even excuse. Sentiment of the gushing type she mistrusted, and it found no place in her appeals. Rigidity in truthfulness was one of her fundamental characteristics. "Error is the only fruit of error," she once said when some one urged that in dealing with the crowd one had to practise some deceptions. "If the road ahead is difficult, say so; if the pilgrimage is drudgery, discipline

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your people so that they may be able to go through it." Consequently, if she held to her views with unbending decision she was always tolerant and always anxious to meet the other side.

For instance, when the suffrage section of the National Council of Women opposed a meeting at which the anti-suffragists should be asked to state their case in connection with the Women's Congress in London in 1899, she led a revolt against what she considered to be narrow-mindedness. Mrs. Fawcett and Mrs. Lyttelton said they would resign from the Women's Committee if the open meeting were held, and my wife threatened to challenge their action on the executive of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. "If there is an opposition to our views which wishes to make itself heard at such a conference as ours, I should think it much safer to let it be heard and meet it. I am sorry that any thoughtful woman should oppose the suffrage, but I welcome such an opportunity as the International Conference gives us of meeting in a friendly way those who differ from us as well as those who agree with us."

She was always so absorbed in gaining

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real rights that she thought little of nominal ones. She was a keen advocate of women's suffrage, however, and considered that women not being allowed to vote was an insult. She walked in the first great demonstration organised by the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, on February 9, 1907, and took her eldest daughter, then only a child of three, with her. "I hope she will thank me when she grows up for being so considerate," she laughed. "I hope she will be proud of it." And amongst the little mementoes of various kinds which she preserved from destruction is the badge she then wore.

Two events discouraged her, however. She saw nothing but disaster as the result of militancy, and when a proclamation came that until women got the vote no legislation affecting women should be passed (a section of the women's suffrage movement took that attitude regarding the barmaids, agitation in particular), her interests in the agitation waned considerably. Further, when she found in connection with her many activities of mercy that rich women were declaring that all their sympathies were to be dried up and all their charities withheld until they got the franchise, she almost

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ceased to do anything for the movement. Her sentiments were against militancy. When she saw it in practice, she said she felt far more injured by the brawlers than they were hurt themselves; she knew that that method of agitation would have to develop into gross misrepresentation in order to keep its hold upon the innocent enthusiasm of its victims; she foresaw that once begun it could not be controlled, that it would have to keep providing its highly spiced feasts even after it had won its preliminary advertisement, and that it would either end in futility by being laughed at, or in disaster, because in time the method would substitute itself for the cause. She scorned the idea that there was anything in common between "militancy" and revolution, and I have already quoted a remark which I once heard her make on the subject.

Her sense of loyal devotion to those who do the real work in life was also outraged by the claims of this one section of the movement. Before militancy was begun by the scene in the Manchester meeting on October 13, 1905, the cause of women's suffrage was again on the up grade. She was deeply interested in it, and was working hard for it at the time. It had suffered

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like every purely political question since the split of the Liberal Party upon Home Rule. It had gone down, not because there was any opposition to it, but because it belonged to a class of question which was sinking below the horizon as the sun does—to rise again. With the reappearance of the spirit of political Liberalism a whole group of questions was bound to emerge—Home Rule, Disestablishment, Franchise. They were coming up before a single voice was raised in militant protest; they would have attained their present position in the political field had no militant organisation disturbed a meeting or held a riotous demonstration.

In the summer of 1899 she was busy helping to promote a discussion and demonstration in favour of the suffrage in connection with the Women's International Congress in London. The revival had then begun. Two years later a petition was signed by 67,000 women textile workers in Lancashire and Cheshire alone. The tide still rose. I well remember the meetings she attended and the optimism which buoyed her up during those years. She was so sure that victory was near, and so eager to exercise the vote, that she consulted an expert in registration law as to whether she

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could be registered for one of the dwelling-places for which she paid rent for poor friends in London. Reports from the country were encouraging. Conventions were held with increasing success in London. In 1905 the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies reported: "An unprecedented number of meetings and large demonstrations have been held by the various societies, and the National Union held a great demonstration attended by over ninety members of Parliament at Queen's Hall on March 4, at which 2,500 people were present; an overflow meeting of over 200 persons being held in the smaller hall." Petitions, circulated amongst professional and industrial women, amongst trades councils and other Labour organisations, were re-marshalling the forces.

Upon this upward trend came militancy. "These people will claim the credit for everything that happens now," she often said; "and people do not trouble very much to go below the surface, and they will agree that when the advertising began, the work began also." She used to say that if the fly on the revolving wheel had lived in the days of newspapers and had shouted enough, it would have succeeded in impart-

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ing its vain delusions to the public. She would not even admit that militancy was necessary as a temporary method; she denied that it had really strengthened the movement or did anything to hasten its triumph; she regarded it as nothing but an interruption in the steady gain that was going on; she believed that by specialising women's interests passionately on this one cause it was doing women great harm; she grudged it the fine generous spirits, of the young women in particular, whom it attracted.

All that can be said for militancy is that it changed the course of the movement. Without it, events would have developed differently; but whoever cares to go back upon those years, and come to conclusions with the actual records in front of him, will see that militancy created no new movement, and did not spur up a flagging one.

She was particularly angry with their specially made history. Being very familiar with the events which marked the progress of women, she knew that the great gains had been secured by the pressure of reason. Being equally familiar with the history of her century she knew what exaggerated importance was given to really insignificant

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events when such a statement was made as that men received the franchise because they threw down the Hyde Park railings and burned Nottingham Castle. But such errors are the axiomatic assumptions of the militant school. She stood stoutly by the faith that the world advances by its soul—"we grow with all our highest aims"; and she was convinced that no movement showed that better than the movement for the freedom of women.

But she was moved most powerfully by the narrowing of the minds of the women who came under the influence of the propaganda. To one who was urging that the voteless woman was a standing insult to all women, and that therefore every interest of women should be put on one side until that insult was removed, she replied: "I agree that it is an insult, and those of us who have been wearing ourselves out helping women in their home conditions, have a much better right to feel that insult than those of you who have been living comparatively useless lives. But I consider it to be a far greater insult to me and my fellow women that our most sacred qualities should be put to economic uses, decorated for the delectation of vulgar and sensuous eyes, and

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that those of you who are so outraged by the minor insult aid and abet in the continuance of the other."

The disagreement in this respect really sprang from the deep-seated mental and moral differences which I have already explained. She was interested in woman as a citizen, but infinitely more so in woman as woman, the embodiment of the qualities and the instincts of maternity—not as a thing of sex but as a specialised aspect of humanity. She desired to "widen the sex movement into a human movement"—the women's movement into one co-operating with men. Anti-mannishness she detested.

She regarded the vote as a badge, as a certificate which she valued very highly, but as nothing more than that. That it would raise wages and lead to drastic economic transformation she did not believe. "We shall use it just as badly as men have used it," she said, "and in getting it I am not to help women to embark on methods which are not naturally their own, which will damage them in their own eyes as well as in those of the public, and which are the worst possible preparation for their duties as citizens." She, knowing the hollowness of mere political conflict, and clinging

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fervently to her work of spiritual improvement on the field that is specially and peculiarly women's, went on with her own undertakings.

But she really cared too much for the franchise to remain out of touch with it altogether. She retained her membership of the committee of the National Union. Her frame of mind was expressed to a correspondent to whom she wrote about the annual conference of the Independent Labour Party in 1910: "I was so sick of the suffrage that I was out of the room part of the time it was being discussed, but I voted for the limited Bill all right." Not long before she died, she went to lunch with a relative, and met unexpectedly some of the militant leaders. She was very pleased about it. She thought she would have been unable to refrain from expressing her profound disagreement with their action, and that would have pained her greatly. She saw the threatening disaster to the cause which came from militancy in its latest phases, and, when she was taken ill, she was considering what could be done to try to save the situation.

Finally, she embodied her ideas of women's political activities in the latest and most

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cherished of her projects, the Women's Labour League. She had seen what she considered to be one of the greatest tragedies of women's life—the husband entering upon public work, having his mind broadened, his tastes altered, his ambitions quickened, whilst his wife, shut off from the awakening influences of the world as though she were a Mahommedan, failed to respond. In the end, the man lived in one world, the woman in another. What they had in common became less and less precious, and that mutual happiness of soul which she longed to see in every family became farther and farther remote. Instead of being a help, the wife became a drag upon the husband, and a common life which began full of promise ended in a burdensome partnership. To her the field of social politics was wide and fertile; she revelled in it like a child in a meadow, and she would fain lead all her friends there. There women would discover the happiness of social service, come in contact with the ideas which were changing the world, and gain inspiring glimpses of what was to be. They, too, would progress. In companionship with men they were to do their work, contributing their enriched experience to the

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common stock of ideas and effort. She liked to quote:

> And so these twain upon the skirts of Time
> Sit side by side, full summ'd in all their powers,
> Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be.
> . . . . .
> Then springs the crowning race of human kind.

But she saw that if ever this dream were to come true, and this utopian desire were to become a reality, women would have to be mustered alone first of all. With women they would have to come under the spell of the vision, and by women they would have to be led to where the great work of the world was being done. So with this object of emancipation and enlightenment in view she set about to form the Women's Labour League. It was to be no mere adjunct of a party like the women's wings of the other parties. It was to be a movement through which the heart of the women, bruised by the roughness of the world, was to turn its pain into beauty and its sorrow into a regenerating energy.

Just as the Railwaymen's Trade Union brought the Labour Party into existence by getting a resolution carried at the Trade Union Congress in 1899, so, fitly enough, the Railway Women's Guild was the organi-



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sation which brought the Women's Labour League into being. In June 1905 the Guild passed a resolution in favour of a political organisation of women, but the election was in the air and it was felt that nothing could be done until the contest was over and the Labour Party had been tested. No sooner had that happened than my wife began to move, and with the co-operation of Mrs. Fenton Macpherson, who was then secretary to the Railway Women's Guild, a start was made. The circular convening the first meeting was dated March 1, 1906, and ran :

"The Executive of the Railway Women's Guild, after consultation with the wives of some Labour Members of Parliament and other women belonging to the Labour Party, is calling a preliminary meeting of women interested in Labour Representation.

"The meeting will be held at 3, Lincoln's Inn Fields (N.W. corner), near Kingsway, London, W.C. (room lent by Mrs. J. Ramsay MacDonald), at 5.30 p.m. on Friday, March 9, 1906, to discuss the formation of a Women's Section of the Labour Party.

"Invitations are being sent to all Labour Party Members of Parliament and candidates asking them to pass them on to their wives and other women supporters, to the

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secretaries of affiliated trade unions with women members, and to Socialist societies, asking them also to pass on the invitation to women members likely to be able to attend.

"Copies of a circular explaining the objects of the proposed women's organisation are herewith enclosed. Those attending will be asked for suggestions and criticisms of the proposals."

It was agreed to form the League, and a Conference was called for June 21 at Leicester. Over the first public meeting it organised, my wife presided, on April 9, 1906, at Clifford's Inn Hall. Over the Conference in June she also presided, and was elected on the Executive Committee. Presiding again over the next Conference she explained what in her opinion the appeal of the League was. "The League was making special efforts to get in touch with the wives and mothers, sisters and daughters, of the men in the movement, with the women trade unionists and all women wage-earners, with the women school teachers who recognised that the children could not have full opportunities under our present system, with the women of leisure and education who wanted to share their advantages with all their

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sisters, with the women on public bodies who look to the Labour Party for guiding principles, above all with that great majority of women whose first duty and responsibility is to their home and their children, but who are learning that they cannot thoroughly fulfil their charge without taking part in the civic life which surrounds and vitally affects their home life."

Still more fully did she voice her joy in a short article on the League which she wrote for the Women's Labour Day Souvenir in 1909. "The Women's Labour League has been born in the springtime—in the springtime, that is, of the people's movement, the springtime of the awakening of the masses to all that is meant by Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality, the awakening of the classes to all that is involved in the divine precept, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' To the outsider, to the woman who, like Martha, is 'cumbered' about everything except the one thing that makes all the rest bright and clear, or to the woman who wraps herself up in narrow and selfish prejudices, our movement may seem to have no beauty, no inspiration. It may seem silly for the housewife to hurry with her scrubbing so as to spare time to address envelopes

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in a dingy back room for some Labour candidate, or to go from door to door, in the biting cold or the flaring heat, leaving political leaflets or asking for signatures to some petition in favour of school feeding, or baths and wash-houses for working women. It may seem blind obstinacy for the factory girl to risk discharge from her means of breadwinning because she will stand up for the rights of her fellow workers, and will not hide her convictions from the foreman who is reducing wages so as to stand well with his master. It may seem at the first blush a roundabout way of looking after one's husband and children to send men to Parliament to oppose the negligence of railway directors and colliery owners, or to elect men and women to the Town Council to ensure better sanitary conditions for the home. It may seem undignified for the University woman to fraternise with the millhand and to defer to the opinions of a so-called social inferior, however sensible she may be. But those who are in the movement feel that we are only just learning what life means. An East End mother came to a school teacher the other day to tell her that she had lost a fourth child from that scourge, tubercular disease. 'I don't

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seem to understand the *meaning* of the world,' moaned the mother in her agony. Another child belonging to that mother is now being attended by the school doctor and has a chance of life which was denied to her brothers and sisters. Medical inspection of school children brings a ray of divine hope into that mother's heart, and we women of the Labour League know that we helped to bring that ray into the grey life of the slums, by our deputations, our petitions, our letters to M.P.'s, our street-corner speaking, our talks over the washtub with our unconverted friends. We know too that the battle is still only half won. Parliament has told local authorities to provide doctors to inspect the children, but more local interest and more money are needed to make the inspection of real value. The branches of our League are stirring up the local interest, are uniting the mothers, the teachers, the nurses, the managers, in the crusade against disease, and we are also urging the provision of money, the better distribution of the wealth of the community, so that poor districts may have the necessities of life for their children, even if rich districts have to go without a few luxuries.

" We are only just beginning. The spring

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buds are only just peeping out. But the hope of spring is in the air.

> 'Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven.'

"We have no age limit in the League. Its members range at least from seventeen to seventy years. But all are young in spirit, young in enthusiasm and faith and energy. The League itself is not much more than three years old. It came into being after the General Election of 1906. The Labour Party took rank by its successes at that election as a party of national importance. The women had helped to build the movement up from its very commencement; they had full recognition in the party of their citizenship and their right and duty to take part in public work. Yet, owing largely to the fact that the party is composed in the main of trade unionists, men were coming by hundreds and thousands into the ranks, and the wives and daughters and sweethearts were being left outside. If the new party was not to be a feckless masculine affair we saw that a special effort must be made to reach the women and enlist their support. We do not want to organise ourselves separately from the men, but we have

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found that the best way to co-operate effectively with them is to educate ourselves, to teach ourselves to discuss and understand and take responsibility in our own meetings, and thus to increase our knowledge and at the same time our power to do right.

"We are affiliated nationally to the Labour Party, and our local Leagues work with the local Labour Councils. We have about half a hundred branches now, from Brechin in the North to Portsmouth in the South, from Belfast in the West to Hull in the East; and the Railway Women's Guild is also affiliated to us. We have occasional great gatherings, witness our recent Annual Conference at Portsmouth, where Miss Margaret Bondfield presided over an assembly of women from all parts of the United Kingdom. The activities of our members are as varied as are their districts. Our subscription is low, usually one penny a month, to let the poorest join, but the real contribution of the members is in time and thought and work.

"We glory in the name 'Labour.' To us it means that every able-bodied woman shall do useful work for the community, whether as housewife or as worker for wages; that she shall have the training

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and the opportunity to give the best service of which she is capable, with hand and eye and brain, and that in return she shall have a share of leisure, of beauty, of comfort; that she shall know something of the fulness of life, and that joy and hope shall not be crushed out by the burden of incessant drudgery and ceaseless anxiety to provide the bare necessaries of existence for herself and those dependent on her care.

"We cannot do much toward this end as separate individuals, whether by continual polishing of our own hearthstones or by charity visiting amongst our neighbours. But by political methods we believe that we can win freedom, economic and spiritual, for ourselves and for the generation that is growing up around us. To this we consecrate ourselves by our membership of the League, and we work through that for the young strong giant of the future—the Labour Party."

A reminiscence of the young League days which Mrs. Simm, one of the earliest workers for it, contributed to the *League Leaflet* for August 1912, is not only an interesting narrative, but explains how my wife won her way to the hearts of humble women.

"Long, long ago, or maybe it only seems

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long ago—we have lived through so much in the past few years of our movement—when we were at the very beginning of things in this district, it was suggested that we hold a District Conference, and Blyth-by-the-Sea was the chosen spot. Mary Middleton and Margaret MacDonald, by their wise suggestions and kindly letters, helped from the London end, and up here, alone, I made local arrangements. Very few of the women now in our branches had then seen the purpose or usefulness of the Labour League, and I can easily recall the women who came to Blyth. Some of them are to-day actively at work in branches ever so far away.

"Having urged our need of some one from headquarters, Mrs. MacDonald at length promised to come.

"By much coaxing and persuasion I had got the various women to undertake certain resolutions, either as movers or seconders. As I said, we were at the beginning of things—and though some of the women had long been attached to the I.L.P. they were not familiar with the sound of their own voices in public, nor with taking any responsibility for speech making.

"No men were to be allowed in the Conference, not under any consideration!

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Speeches might be read if that was any help! In fact, I was ready to promise almost anything in my anxiety to get the women to begin to do things for themselves, and by dint of perseverance the programme was at length arranged. The resolutions dealt with unemployment, old-age pensions, feeding of necessitous children, and State-aided schools for defective children—not a bad selection for beginners. Several little hints and notes of information were exchanged, and everything seemed to be going forward nicely. Imagine my dismay, however, when a few days before the eventful Saturday, I began to receive appeals to be 'let off.' 'Now that Mrs. MacDonald is coming,' they said, 'we are afraid; do get some one else to do it all.' Then I felt that Mrs. MacDonald would think us a fine lot, and I was very uneasy. In my imagination I saw movers of resolutions taking ozone by the seashore while we waited for them in the hall, and I wondered what was to be done.

"On the way from the station I mentioned the difficulty to Mrs. MacDonald, and she was highly amused. 'It will be all right,' said she, 'they won't be afraid of me. I'll stumble and stammer, and they will

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sympathise and help me out.' I have often thought of that day and of her wonderful adaptability. The women who were present have a precious memory to preserve. Mrs. MacDonald spoke first, bringing official greetings from the Executive Committee. She explained that she was able to attend through the Honorary Secretary, Mrs. Middleton, sharing her work and minding her baby while she came North. She told us how they watched the development of the North-Eastern District with great interest, in the hope that other parts of the country would benefit by our experience, and showed us that the simplest bit of work became important when done in the true spirit of faith and helpfulness. She made us feel at home, yet earnest, and as if we were already part of a great movement which was to link up Labour women right throughout the country. But all the time she hesitated and stumbled here and there to find a right word, just as any of us might have done ourselves. It might have been her first Conference as well as ours, so unassuming were all her suggestions. The women saw at once that they need not fear criticism or patronage, and they were their natural selves. Doubtless many mistakes were

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made, but we laughed them aside and went on trying. It is so different being laughed *with* and *at*. A big public meeting was held in the evening, at which Mrs. MacDonald spoke on 'Home Life and Politics,' and she was much amused at a prominent Liberal who took occasion to 'rate' the Labour people for not arranging votes of thanks when they had so fine an address. That was our first venture, and though many successful Conferences have since been held, it stands alone and incomparable, enshrined in holy memories, and a guide to other days.

"Sometimes one hears unkindly criticisms of the Women's Labour League—as, of course, may be expected—but those who knew the high ideals and faith of its founder need never be dismayed. Margaret MacDonald knew of the dumb strivings and yearnings of the working-woman, and meant the League to enable her to voice her needs and organise her efforts."

With her were some remarkable women, whose names will never be written save in the memories of those who knew them. But of them one must not be passed over in silence. The League was founded in 1906 and the Conference of May 1907 elected Mary Middleton its secretary. A strange

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bond joined her to my wife. They were affectionate sisters in their lives, and in their deaths they were hardly divided. Mrs. Middleton had been a domestic servant, and had come to London shortly after her marriage. In everything of interest to Labour she was interested, and in a quiet, happy way she ingratiated herself with everybody. Her own placidity was such that peace followed on her footsteps. She was as one who had some divine knowledge in her heart. Under her care the League grew. Its influence may be gathered when it is told that one good woman of mature years taught herself to write in order that she might perform the duties of a local secretary, and I remember how my wife struggled with her letters with a patient pride which could not be equalled by a Court sycophant who doted on an Imperial epistle. There is a touching devotion in this letter from a branch secretary (January 3, 1909), which may be taken as an illustration of the spirit of the women: "Several would join, but they are afraid of the sneers and insults (of which I have had more than my fair share), as since our by-election the boycotting and prejudice are terrible.... I have got permission to use a small room as often as I like if I will light

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the fire before, and sweep it up after, using it."

Just when the world was getting so very pleasant for her, Mary Middleton was told that fate had been cruel to her and that her life was all but ended. The only difference that that made was that her serenity became more serene. Slowly she went down into the mists, radiating on those around her a light of growing brightness. Friends who went to mourn came away from her comforted. "I felt the contact with her vibrate through me for days after," one of her visitors wrote.

"I am awfully sad just now," my wife wrote on March 28, 1910, "because, in addition to my own trouble [our boy had just died], a secretary who really did seem to have dropped from heaven is apparently going back there. She is gloriously plucky and a lesson to every one." To Mary Middleton herself she wrote on September 7, 1910, strangely enough exactly one year before she herself was to be told she was dying: "We have had a pretty big dose of sadness this year, and your goodness and courage have helped immensely to make one feel that the note of triumph can run through it all—helped us and ever so many more of your friends."

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Practically every day for some months found my wife at her bedside. When she was not very able to go, she would not stay away. With sad happiness in her heart she brought the baby on its very first long expedition to see her friend, and almost the last words that the dying woman said were in farewell to the child: "Sheila! Sheila! Good-night, Sheila!" The two almost seemed to die together. For some time my wife used the notepaper which bore at its head both their names as joint secretaries of the League. "I am using this paper," she explained to a friend, "simply as a piece of sentiment. It is so hard to drop her name." At another time she wrote: "I use this paper for the pleasure of seeing Mary's name upon it." Finally, when very weary herself: "I have been wishing Mary were here to talk it over, but I am afraid I am complaining."

As a fitting memorial to her friend my wife proposed to establish a Baby Clinic in a poverty-stricken corner of North Kensington. She was chairman of the committee, and now the names of them both are united in this little institution, which is being maintained "in memory of Mary Middleton and Margaret MacDonald."

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The League was run in close co-operation with the Labour Party, it held its annual conferences at the same time and place as those of the party, it took a share in elections, its branches affiliated with the local parties, and in 1908 it affiliated itself to the National party. But it was no mere echo, no mere marionette. It was an organisation of women to translate Labour needs into the thoughts of womanhood. And so, when at its birth the question of the suffrage threatened to disrupt it, for its membership was divided between the various suffrage camps, she worked to keep it distinct and united, and to diminish the disrupting influences, for she said : " It is far better for the future of women that our League should remain united and active in its own work and should continue to influence the general work of the Labour Party, than that it should pass any vote about suffrage."

Nor would this section be complete without reference to her international work. She was on several peace and international goodwill committees. Her command of French and German enabled her to keep in touch with the great international movements. One of her last speeches was in German to a number of German delegates



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travelling in this country under the care of the Adult Schools, and she had regular correspondents practically in every country of the world. The triennial International Congresses of the Socialist movement were red-letter events, and with the exception of the Paris Congress of 1900, when our General Election kept her away at the last moment, she attended every one since that in London in 1896. At these Congresses she stood up sturdily for the British school of Socialism; she organised a representative delegation of British women from the Labour League, and her influence was beginning to tell, though most of the leading Socialist women of the Continent were against her. The number of supporters whom she found at Copenhagen in 1910 cheered her greatly, and had she been spared but a few more years, her influence would have made a permanent mark on the International Conferences of Socialist Women. But that work, like so much else, now remains to be finished, and no hand has appeared as yet apparently to do it.

She recognised, moreover, that our influence on these International gatherings would depend largely in the long run upon the attitude of the Empire to world prob-

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lems. Would it be influenced by the spirit of enlightened policy and liberty? If so, it would be well. So she kept in specially close touch with Imperial movements and their leaders. It is not too much to say that from her visit to Australia in 1906 originated the political organisation of Australian Labour women. She looked forward with special pleasure to the last Imperial Conference and particularly to the visit of Mr. Fisher and his Australian colleagues, and her last public work was superintending and presiding over the meeting of welcome to them organised by the Women's Labour League. No one thought that her bright and happy appearance that night was the close of her political life, but it was so, and I think, had she known, she would not have wished for a different ending.

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## *Chapter VIII*

## HERSELF

THERE was a rugged democratic texture in her friendship which gave it its peculiar strength. If she won the affection of so many with whom she came in contact, she used no cheap arts to that end—no art of address, no art of patronage, no art of joviality, no art of decoration. She took to people for their qualities; she chose her friends by rapidly-moving instinct. She liked people or she did not, and she had generally made up her mind about them at a first interview. She looked for sincerity in her friends and a strenuous experience of life. She felt the bond of sisterhood far more strongly with a poor working woman who had striven, than with anybody else who had not. She once wrote to her valued friend, Mrs. Bruce Glasier (March 6, 1910): "The impertinence of these middle-class people who think they are more worth listening to than people who have gone



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through the realities of life and managed to struggle up to the light in spite of drawbacks in education. It makes me feel 'class conscious'—only it is my own class I feel bitter against."

It braces up one's faith to know how her solid and ungarnished work and her quiet undemonstrative manner did find a way to the hearts of those with whom she came in contact. The simple explanation is, she believed in them. "She believed in us all," one colleague wrote after her death, "and so she could make diamonds out of dust." She expressed the same thing in another way when commenting upon the crowds which turned out to see Mr. Spurgeon's funeral: "No feeling of patriotism, of warlike triumph, of sympathetic loyalty, is so powerful in attaching multitudes to one man as the feeling that to him they owe their spiritual life and growth." And so she was greeted by many messages like these: "I wonder if you have any idea of how truly rejoiced I am to know you are back and ready to help and cheer us." "How glad scores of us will be to feel you are in the fray with us again." "I shall miss you at the Conference. Indeed, no matter how many other women may be

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there, and no matter how kind and charming they may be—I shall feel quite lonely without you."

But in addition to that attractive serious side of her, she had a girlish gaiety about her which her friends knew so well. This made her love youth as she loved the spring. I remember she was very pleased at a newspaper description of her published in a Toronto newspaper when she was there attending the meeting of the British Association in 1897. I find it amongst her papers. Part of it is: "One of the bright young ladies among our guests is Mrs. J. R. MacDonald, a niece of Lord Kelvin. Gowned in a simple Dresden silk and garden hat, with her pretty colour and soft young face, she looks a veritable child." Until the weight of her work and the sadness of her heart aged her, she looked younger than her years. This quality of gaiety comes out in many of her letters, though they were mostly business notes written hurriedly without literary colour. From a few of them flashes of her brightness and wisdom and affection may be drawn. They enable us to fill in the details of the portrait of her personality. "We have been married more than two years: are we not getting old stagers?"

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"There is an awfully nice lady on board who smokes and drinks liqueurs. I am sure we shall be friends, and perhaps she will join the Women's Labour League." When I was elected to Parliament she wrote: "I am looking forward to revelling in a mass of Blue-books, Bills, and notices without having to beg, borrow, steal, or buy them." "I have a rooted dislike to education things. I think I heard too much of them in my youth before I understood them." She defined the National Union of Women Workers as "a Union to learn facts and tolerance." Of women workers she said: "Slavery one half, starvation the other." She expressed her ideal thus: "I want to give people work, and I want to give people leisure." "I know it will be bright with us whatever the weather is like." "We have been having a jolly time except that politics are very horrible" (in 1900). "'My dear mother': I am so glad to be able to put these three words together." "We expect to find more Paradise and more difficulties as we go on." "Oh for the days when we were young at the Doreck—but I think I prefer the present in spite of P. and more deep sorrows." "How nice it will be when everybody has

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a civic conscience." To Mrs. Middleton, from the International Socialist Congress at Copenhagen, she wrote: "You have no idea how every one loves you, being a nice modest 'comrade'—but they do. Directly one mentions you they begin to sing your praises and their affections for you. I never contradict them." "We both know we are sad and so don't mind laughing and joking." "A fuller realisation came to me, through that letter, of your own sorrow experienced but put aside for the sake of others." "The Creator is very prodigal. I have never lost one friend because I did what I thought to be right, but I found half a dozen new ones."

And like every one whose strength does not come from the applause of men, but is independent of it, she had within her being a Holy of Holies where she sat alone and where the presence of her dearest was forbidden. In the long dark nights of the Lossiemouth late autumn and winter, with the moan of the sea passing over the land like the cry of toiling creation, the call of the night bird flying overhead, and the mass of stars shining above her, she would retire within herself and go out silently to the shore or the moors in quest of some-

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thing which haunts life like a dim vision of a strange beauty or a confused echo of a far-away melody.

If this record I have given of strenuous public work and of thought constantly playing upon the troubles that afflicted the mass of her fellow beings seems to imply that her whole life was absorbed in the world outside, nothing could be further from the truth. Her home was the source of her steadfastness and her energy. In a sense her public work was a martyrdom to her. "In a desert of a home without children and generally without a husband," she described her state during the summer of 1909, when Parliament sat long and the children had gone on holidays. To do her work she had to bow her neck to a yoke. The yoke was undoubtedly easy, and the burden was undoubtedly light, because both were assumed in obedience to an inner voice, but no woman's heart yearned more than hers for domestic quiet spent in the seclusion of home with personal friends and children around her. She once defined Socialism as 'the State of homes.' The home was her Paradise.

She lived most truly when the day's work was done, when the world was shut out

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and the lamps were lit, and when I was at home. The tenderness of her soul showed itself in the lights she chose. She always preferred the yellow light of lamps, with their rich shadows behind on the walls and their deep darkness in the room spaces. Then she sat, sewing or darning in the narrow circumference of light, whilst I read from some book or other generally far removed in its thoughts from our everyday battles. In this way, we read through most of Thackeray and Dickens, the best of Scott, Symonds' *Renaissance*, Carlyle, and Ruskin. The Sunday reading was always separate, because she did not like to have the week-day books read on Sunday as well.

She loved the long dark nights and sat, before the lamps were lit, watching the shadow movements on the walls of the room made by the lights of the Fields below, and the black sky above with the glare from the streets reflected on the clouds. She liked to be silent then; then she opened her mind to the spirit of life. One gets into moods when one ceases to be communicative. The great peace at the heart of life fills one with the silent joy of the universal, a joy without a ripple to catch the sun, a joy which is the essential blessedness of

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being, the joy of standing on the shores of the land where there will be no troubles, no imperfections, and no emotions save those of pure existence. She thought that might be the feeling of the dead who are resting from their labours.

Shortly after we married she found that the world was to claim much time from both of us, and she considered schemes for defeating the world in its demands. At length she hit upon the idea of a week-end cottage. She was fond of walking, of starting in the morning and roaming all day through wood and field until the evening brought her home; and in March 1905 we pitched upon a small place at Chesham Bois by a delightful common and in the centre of innumerable field-paths and by-ways amongst the Chilterns. In every season, in fine weather and in bad, we roamed over the countryside from Northwood to Aylesbury, from the Thames to the hills beyond Tring—a land rich in historical memories and favoured by the affectionate care of Nature. She brought her friends there, and when not down ourselves she always tried to get some one else to go, that haply the blessings we had there might visit them too.

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When any special visitors came from abroad, she liked to take them through that country by a route of which she never tired. We ran them down to Stoke Poges, where they strolled through the church and the churchyard where the lyrical solemnity of the *Elegy* seems to have settled as an indwelling spirit. Thence we went to Chalfont St. Giles, where in the church one still hears the footfall of dead centuries, and in Milton's cottage the poet and his visitor Ellwood still wait to greet the reverent wanderer. Jordans, where God meets one face to face more directly than in any cathedral in the land, was the next stopping-place, and then at Beaconsfield we halted at midday. The journey was continued to Great Hampden Church where the hero of the Civil Wars is laid. She brought her friends to the end of the road up which the soldiers brought his body, and she liked me to say the first verses of the psalms they sang coming and going. On their way up carrying his body, they sang:

> Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place
> In generations all,
> Before Thou ever hadst brought forth
> The mountains great or small;

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and they went away singing:

> Judge me, O God, and plead my cause
> Against th' ungodly nation;
> From the unjust and crafty man,
> O be Thou my salvation.

Then she brought them home. She often expressed a hope that her children would feel as she did on that journey. It was a land of majestic solemnity and magnificent romance, haunted by the shades of those who stood for the best in the life of England—Cromwell, Milton, Hampden, Penn, Burke.

Then, in the long summer holidays, she went to my home at Lossiemouth. "I always hoped that if I ever married, my husband's mother would be living and would like me," she wrote to mine in the first letter she ever addressed to her. And when the days lengthened, her heart and thoughts always turned towards her second home in the North. There she knew the peace that she loved so much. The sea, the great expanse of sky, the lonely sand-hillocks, the moors, were very enticing to her. Away to the north across the Firth rose the pale blue hills of Sutherland and Ross; to the south lay the fertile farms of Morayshire sloping up through green wood and purple moorland into the blue tops of the Gram-

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pians, with the ruined Palace of Spynie in the mid distance; to the east swept the sea, bordered by a wide stretch of yellow sand bending away into the horizon, with hills in the background, the whole stretching out in a peaceful beauty which has won for it the name of the "Bay of Naples"; westwards were woods and farms up to the encompassing hills. In the autumn, when she was there most frequently, the beauty of the place was enhanced by the richest of sunsets in purple and red and gold. There she thought of spending the evening of her days when her work was done and she was waiting for the divine mercy of death. There she wanted to be buried, and there, in the churchyard where the first cathedral chapter in Morayshire was held, her ashes lie almost shadowed in the early summer mornings by the weather-worn cross which marks the eastern wall of the old church.

In preparation for these waiting days we decided to build a house on the edge of a moor where she delighted to walk in the afternoons and lie and read. She was hardly in it—the last time being when my mother died. She was very happy about it, and was beginning to gather there the possessions which were the gods of her hearth. She

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was particularly fond of the peasant songs and poetry of Scotland. We were to read them when we were there, and there they stand, gathered from many catalogues, waiting for a hand which it was destined was never to open them.

The long journeys abroad which we took from time to time were also planned, partly to get away from the strife of things that kept domestic quiet so far away from her. On the sea the world was shut out; no one came to separate us; there were no broken week-ends. She enjoyed the fresh experiences, the storing of her mind with knowledge, and the widening of her circle of friends—but above all that she was happy that we were together.

On the first of those excursions we left London on August 6, 1897. The British Association was meeting that year in Toronto, and she wished to be there. The New World made her young again. She revelled like a child in all she saw, and she playfully began "a novel of love" on the time-tables which American railway companies supply so liberally to their patrons. On that visit she made friends who remained in close touch with her throughout her life. They sent their

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friends to us, and we sent ours to them. They have been like neighbours ever since. That always happened in these journeyings.

From New York we made our way to Toronto by Kingston, Albany, and Buffalo. Mr. Bryan had just fought his first great fight, and she was keenly interested in discussing it with every one she met. Of course Niagara was visited. She was not *blasé* enough to criticise it. It filled her with awe and joy. She "did" everything which young people do, like the Cave of the Winds, the "Maid of the Mist," and the whirlpool, and she rushed as eagerly as a child to every point of vantage. Some people feel oppressed by the might of Nature. She always identified herself with it. The mighty power of the waters, the noise, the laugh which haunts the gorge at the puniness of man, only strengthened her. She was in the tempest.

A few days later we had breakfast in the new national Algonquin Park, in a clearing freshly made for us. The train was stopped near Rock Lake where there was no station, fires were burning in the open, a tent was spread where but a day or so before the thick forest had been. Civilisation seemed to be generations off.

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We were in the reign of untamed nature and conquering muscle. Again the spirit of the happy child returned. She crawled through the undergrowth, she bored her way along narrow tracks which the beasts had made, she sunk herself in the shaded silences of the forest.

Once more, in a cross-country journey from Kingston, Ontario, to the junction at Renfrew, she spent a wonderful day. The train ran to no time-table apparently; it was not meant for passengers, except those who could not be bruised or broken. We were flung from our seats when it stopped; we were banged against them when it started. But the country! Whether seared by fire or covered by forest it was an endless delight of freshness. The summit of satisfaction was reached at Rat Portage, then a little village. Its name and the fact that it lay upon the Lake in the Woods, so full of romance for those who had read liberally in Indian tales, brought us to it, and made us decide to remain in it for some days. Indian canoes glided on the lake; islands studded it which, with their clothing of trees, were of that wild fringy outline which we used to see in the illustrations to those Indian



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romances; from the islands fluttered the little white rags marking where some Indian was buried. We spent our days on the water exploring the lake for miles around, boiling our tea-kettle in the bottom of our boat in the afternoon, escaping from the midday sun under the trees.

A boat traded between Rat Portage and Fort Frances on the Rainy River, and she had to see the Rainy River, just as she would have insisted upon seeing Mother Hubbard, had she been alive. The Sunday spent on the river was a never-to-be-forgotten day. Indians, pioneers, men and women of the frontier, came to greet the boat at its many stopping-places, and received from it their stocks of necessities. We were up early, and were rewarded by seeing an exciting moose hunt. Ahead in the river there floated what seemed to be a bundle of twigs. On the bank two Indians were in some commotion. They jumped into a canoe and, under the concealment of the banks, shot swiftly up the river. The bundle of twigs had become very animated, and word had gone round that it was the head of a moose. It had turned to go back, and the Indians were after it in the open. A moment or two followed

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when we were like excited dogs straining at leashes. The great ripples that swung away up and down the river told how the beast was fighting to escape, and like the flight of an arrow the canoe darted after it. Twice a gun was raised, but for some reason nothing happened. Just when the canoe seemed to be upon it, the great head was raised up heavily from the water. The beast had found its feet and, with snorting and splashing, it swung itself forward and dashed into the forest. Never did gladiator win more magnificently the prize of life.

Later on in the day we stranded on a rock at some rapids; an Indian settlement emptied itself out to see us—all apparently except the church, which came out later, and added two women and a boy to the crowd. It was one of those days which can be lived but once, but which, when lived, are never forgotten. On such an occasion romance seems to come out to greet you in her best smile, and in her most hospitable mood shows you round her domain. And you receive her with a joyful childish clapping of hands.

Westward we went to Winnipeg, and then down the Red River valley to the

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United States border (where, on a Sunday, we visited one of the Menonite settlements, went to a service, and lunched with one of the people), through Minneapolis on to Chicago (where we stayed at Hull House, and learned to understand the wonderful charm of its head, Miss Jane Addams, and where we had particularly interesting conversations with Governor Altgelt, the friend and sponsor of Mr. W. J. Bryan in his first and most famous nomination for the Presidency), Indianapolis, St. Louis, and back through Boston and Concord to Philadelphia and New York. One of the interludes in this part of the journey of which she retained a particularly keen recollection was a visit she paid to Mrs. J. T. Field ("a sweet old-fashioned body, and greatly interested in all kinds of movements and thought"), the friend of Lowell, Wendell Holmes, Dickens, and Tennyson, at Manchester-by-Sea. There we had as our fellow guest Miss Sarah Orne Jewett. From beginning to end, it was to her a return of riotous youth, when the mind delights in every new impression, and when every day dawns with a new revelation and sets with a freshened curiosity.

In the spring of 1899 a longing came upon

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her to go back to one of the places where she had been as a girl, and we went to Switzerland. Before the roads were opened we walked from the entrance to the St. Gothard tunnel up to Hospenthal, over the Furka, across the Rhone, up the Grimsel, down to the Hospice, on to Meiringen, and thence to Grindelwald. The snow was on the ground all the way; the avalanches were rumbling amongst the mountains; we were wet through every day. It was a big undertaking, calling for great physical endurance. But she delighted in the deep snows and the difficulties, and was very proud when, on arrival at Grindelwald, the story of our tramp was regarded as nothing but romancing.

Later in the year we went to Orkney, once more just to be together and wander off the beaten track and forget the world. In the land of the *Pirate*, sitting amidst the standing stones of Stennis when the sun went down, wandering amidst the ruined houses of the vanished races, trudging through the heather of Hoy, treading upon the footsteps of Hugh Miller and others who explored the interesting geology of the islands, she seemed another woman from the sedate, strenuous, and methodical

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person who attended committees and fought for righteous causes in London.

In 1900, shamefacedly and almost in secret, she went to Oberammergau. She was afraid that the play would be vulgar and stagy, but somehow a desire to see it had taken possession of her, and she could not deny it. "At any rate," she said, "we shall go as pilgrims and on foot," and for a week we walked to the valley of the Ammer. I think she caught the spirit of the mediæval pilgrim, for when we first saw the cross on the Kofel in the evening light, and later when the Calvary on the little hill outside the village came into view, she stopped and looked as though she were a sweet novice who had seen some blessed revelation of her faith. The play and the players captured her. "Whether we are rich or poor," she wrote in the *Labour Leader* of August 11, 1900, "peasants or tourists, we all have souls, and our souls, though many of us keep them covered away and uncared for, are the most important parts of us; and it is because the Passion actors in the Passion Play appeal directly to the spiritual nature, to what is highest and yet most human in their audience, that they succeed in such a

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marvellous way." She saw in it an inspiring revelation of a spiritual democracy. "Next time," she said when we came away, "I should like to bring our children." She did so in 1910. But in some subtle way Oberammergau had changed, and when leaving she said: "I do not think we shall come back."

For 1902 she planned another long journey. The children were to be left in Lossiemouth under the care of my mother, and we were to go away once more into liberty and to be together. We were to go westwards through America, and then southwards down the Pacific coast, striking thence through Arizona into Mexico, and back through the industrial South to New York. Plans were all made, and tickets taken, when peace was declared in South Africa. The burning shame of the war had tormented her through the weary months it lasted. She joined committees to try to stop it, to work for a reform of the concentration camps, to make an offering to the Dutch to show them there was some of the old honour, some of the old love of liberty and justice, left in a decadent and materialistically-minded England. She entertained delegates from South Africa; she

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gave her rooms to their meetings. "If the mob throw stones up to our windows," she said, "their muscle will have to be as well developed as their ignorance, which is impossible."

That the vulgarity of Mammon should dominate Park Lane and be an open-sesame to the most select circles of Society did not trouble her, for she held Society in contempt, but when it came to rule the country and write our history, "the desire to assassinate creeps into my heart," she remarked. She was one of those quiet undemonstrative women who leave their names written on the face of countries where revolutions break out. In those terrible days of shame and passion she became bitter. Once, when leaving a house in a fashionable part of London, where she had been attending a meeting addressed by a deputation from South Africa, she was beset by a mob in evening dress. Some of the ladies standing on the curbstone hissed her. She deliberately stood and looked them in the face. Those next her seemed to be taken aback. "What have you to say?" she asked, and, finding no response, added: "Does shame make you women dumb? If a working woman went into the streets as you do, her cheeks would

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burn with a sense of disgrace," and she walked unmolested away.

She wanted, when peace came, to go and talk with the women who had endured, and to see with her own eyes what the war meant. On August 2 we left England, and on the 19th arrived in Cape Town. Soldiers were everywhere; martial law was still in operation. We made our way northwards over the battlefields south of Kimberley, and later on, in Natal; we wandered about the places around Ladysmith, where but a few months before the murderous din of men fighting and dying, in anger and in pain, went up to heaven. The trenches were still open, every stone was spattered over by bullets; fragments of shells, pipes, tobacco-pouches, unfired cartridges, the débris of the game of murder, lay everywhere. The tragedy was all the more moving that places like the Tugela and the Modder Rivers, where the strife must have been hottest and the carnage most fearful, seemed to have been chosen by the Goddess of Peace as spots where she meant that her temples should be built.

Three days from Harrismith to Kroonstad, through Bethlehem, Senekal, and Lindley we trekked, and saw nothing but desolation,

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ruined farms, burnt villages. The place that knew man knew him no more, and was returning to the wilderness. Grass grew upon broken hearthstones and lizards crawled upon deserted doorsteps. Food was hardly to be had for love or money, and one day we had to content ourselves with coffee and marmalade until nightfall, when Providence threw us in the way of a man who had taken military stores and shared some of them with us. Before the feast was over some comments upon honesty—national and personal—made by her nearly ended it with unpleasant abruptness for us.

At Irene, Pietermaritzburg, and elsewhere we visited the camps, especially the corners full of white sparkling gravestones marking where the little children lay, and in the shanties we heard the bitter women tell their tales of hatred. Even these women she subdued by her quiet affection, and they cried and blessed her while she consoled them for the loss of their children, and told them of the efforts that had been made in England to stop the war. The ghastly flats on the top of Spion Kop lined with the trenches of dead wrenched our hearts, but the twist was not so cruel as that which the concentration camps gave us. In a train of returned

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prisoners she made many friends, though they were sullen at first; the people of a little village that had suffered much by both fire and sword came, and, through their minister, presented her with some eggs when she left—the only thing they had in the world to give her. The good man prayed that the blessing of God would rest upon her, and thanked her for showing them at such a moment the "best side of England."

In Pretoria and elsewhere we were taken into the households of men who had fought against us. They were still broken after the occupation; libraries were destroyed, books wantonly torn, pianos smashed, wells damaged. But she brought peace with her, and on the stoeps of an evening they told her in calm tones of their battles and escapes. At Johannesburg she met those who had made the war, and heard their cynical tales of how it was done; she talked with the workmen already beginning to be disillusioned, and laughed at them; she saw some of those who were patriotic in broken English and was taught by them how our national reputation had become a mere thing to traffic with by aliens and blackguards in the market-place. "Mrs. —— is now pro-

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English," she wrote of a lady we met at a Government House, "and it was more pathetic and wretched to see her and her tears, going round the Government House under its altered conditions, than to hear the irreconcilable Mrs. —— rage about it."

The whole journey was through a land of sorrow and destruction, of mourning and hate, and she never lost its impress. When she returned to Cape Town a cable awaited her telling her of the death of her father. She had finally passed the border of youth. Henceforth she seemed to live often in the thought that the twilight was coming, and that, in spite of her own happiness, the sun was hastening to a setting and the night creeping on.

Our next wandering took us to Ireland at the Eastertime of 1905. We walked from Killybegs round the shoulder of Donegal to Dunfanaghy through Carrick and Glencolumbkille—over the mighty cliffs which rise up into Slieve League, which we tried to cross in a mist, but from which we had to retreat, up on to Horn Head, where we spent a day watching the myriads of birds on the cliffs, screeching, flying, fluttering, swooping, and the sleepy sea below placidly dreaming of wrath and fury.

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Next year came another long absence from home. She was tired and wanted to get away. Australian politics allured her, and the long sea voyage still more. She longed to sit on the deck on a calm sea "just feeling happy." Her old hungering after being, as well as doing, had come upon her. It seemed a prodigious holiday, but she said that the world could well spare us for a few months. People in active life must go away into the wilderness at least once in four years, she thought. "I am going away," she wrote to a friend, "with an easy conscience. I only wish you could all go in the same way. Our only chance of having three meals a day together and of discovering really how nice people we both are, is to run away altogether from you. I think we can tolerate four or five months of our own dear selves, and then—Charing Cross, the Customs, and you."

We went through Canada, and were disillusioned. Our old Rat Portage had vanished into another name. The islands on its lake no longer kept in silence the bodies of departed Indians; vulgar chalets were built upon them, and instead of white ragged streamers, Stars and Stripes and Union Jacks flew over them; annoying motor-boats had

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taken the places of delightful canoes. We went westwards to the mountains, seeking the seclusion we had found further eastwards only a year or two before, and they gave us peace. Long walks through their woods and by their lakes brought us into the serene world of being.

Then came the Pacific with favours of calm weather, and sunny days in Honolulu and Fiji, and finally Australia and New Zealand, with their keen-hearted, hospitable people, their wonderful and weird places, like the deserts with Broken Hill and Kalgoorlie and the geyser regions with Rotorua and Tokaano; their beauties, like the Wanganui; their domesticity, like Adelaide. She investigated the operations of Wages Boards and compulsory arbitration, she went to see the land settlements created from the break up of great estates, she counselled the women regarding the formation of Labour Leagues, but she always said: "I am here for a family party, not on a mission." Of the friends she then met, none found a warmer welcome in her heart than Mr. Price, the Premier of South Australia, a genuinely simple and unassuming good man, the type of the best which Labour can give to the State. When he visited this

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country just before his death, she had a great day with him on that Buckinghamshire tour which I have just described.

The voyage home pleased her greatly. The weather was perfect. The day in Ceylon, with the night at Kandy, brought her under the allurement of India. She returned happy and buoyant and longing for the yoke of work.

In the autumn of 1909 we took our last long journey together. She felt a kind of compelling fate within her, driving her away against her will. It was as though she had had an occult knowledge of what was approaching, and that she had to take every step decreed. India was to complete her experience on this earth. She was unhappy leaving the children. Forebodings were in her heart. She talked as though it were her last honeymoon trip. That is one reason, I think, why she entered with such tender sympathy into the life of India. The quiet dignity of the people, the repose of the land, its past, its religion, led her gently by the hand away across the borderland of strife into resignation. She met the Eternal there. The sense that this had been for untold ages, the unmurmuring passivity of the people, the great mass which teemed

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around, were new experiences which shrunk the individual into insignificance and gave a new meaning to the obeisance: "A thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." India led her into those temples where the Eternal and Infinite sit imperturbable, full of both joy and sorrow, but knowing neither, and from which human beings return prepared to meet whatever is in store for them. South Africa made her sad and put her youth to flight; India taught her to welcome death.

The colour and crowded movement of Bombay, the public and independent spirit of Baroda, the detached orientalism of Udaipur, the sleeping splendour of Delhi, and of Agra, and the decayed glory of Chitorgarh and of Fatehpur-Sikri, the wilder forcefulness of the cities of the far north-west, and the forbidding gateway through the mountains to Afghanistan, brought her step by step up to an understanding of India. Many conversations with the people about their aspirations, particularly one in Benares with an Indian musician playing his plaintive drawling melodies, one in Calcutta in the dim light of Sister Nivedita's rooms, and one in Delhi with a missionary who under-

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stood, made her feel how India could be the mother of her people. She came near to that vision of the land gathering up her children into her lap and blessing them with her love, a land to whose breast her people nestled for food and raiment, for comfort and consolation—the great Mother Goddess.

During this journey she did not appear to have her usual thirst for knowledge. She wanted to feel. But she did not go blindly through the journey, for I remember how on one occasion she was able to correct a certain official regarding matters under his control. Her inquiries had put her in possession of facts of which he was ignorant. In Bombay and Calcutta the life of the industrial classes interested her, and she went about seeing where they lived and worked. She also saw as much of the life of women as she could, and the two chapters on the life of women in my book, *The Awakening of India*, are by her. She was interested that the Zenana was disturbed by a new life, and that women were awakening even there. But still throughout the journey it was her soul that was active. The married child, the secluded woman, the dominating castes formed a world the life of which she tried to feel. She sought out the spirit of India;



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the events, the statistics, the conflicts were but surface disturbances in which for the moment she was but mildly interested. Then in a hurry the General Election summoned us home, for my seat had to be defended. Our journeyings together were ended.

Our friends met us at Charing Cross, and that evening one of them told her that Mary Middleton was incurably ill. The year was heavy with work and sorrow. On February 8 our little boy David died, and eight days afterwards my mother followed him. Slowly Mary Middleton drew into the shadows, and practically every day my wife went to be with her. Her thoughts never left her friend's bedside. On April 24 she too died, and the will to live seemed to go out of my wife.

There are strange, mysteriously spun bonds of affection that entwine us to the dead and draw us away. We live in a companionship of memories and ghosts. The world changes, the things of substance dissolve, the unseen claims us, and we go, and nothing can keep us back. Every night and morning she greeted her dead boy, and the yearnings of her bereaved heart never passed away. "It is just two months to-

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day since David left us, and sometimes it seems two centuries and sometimes so fresh that I have not realised it yet." "One's quieter moments get fuller and fuller with thoughts of our dead ones."

Of death she was never afraid.

> I think of death as some delightful journey
> That I shall take when all my tasks are done.

She stood by it, feeling its mystery, but refusing to believe in its mastership. In her strange quiet way she brought great consolation to her bereaved friends through this attitude. To friends whose little girl, an only child, died shortly after our own boy, she wrote: "I know it only too well and all you will have to go through. . . . I feel as if I knew by heart all the kind things that friends say to comfort you, and many of them are real comfort—at any rate, the kind thought and sympathy behind always are. . . . I haven't dared to tell the children yet. . . . Poor little things, life will seem a mysterious and black thing for them [the little girl had been photographed with them before our own little boy died]. I have been looking at the group taken in Mrs. Macpherson's garden. We have treasured it, because it is the only one of our five chil-

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dren together. It seems so cruel that two of that bright little group should now be gone.... So many mothers who have lost children have written to me that they still feel them near." To another friend she wrote at that time: "I am alone at home just now and have such a queer feeling that I am not so much alone as I should have been if David were playing with the others down at Amersham. Last night, when over in the sitting-room, I left the door open as I always do when the children are at home, so as to hear them if they waken. I pretended he was there, and though I laughed at myself I humoured the fancy. I always say 'Good morning' to his little spirit, too, in case he wants me." These thoughts pulled her as children do when they want us to go with them, and one began to see that a subtile change was coming upon her. She was often weary. Apologies that she was not quite herself begin to appear in her letters: "I hope my grumbles will not make you think I am overtired. I am really not ill, I am only tired."

One day at the end of July, walking from the station to our cottage in Chesham Bois wearied her, and she complained of pains. The finger bearing her wedding-ring was

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swollen. "It is protesting against its burdens," she said, with a smile. We returned to London, and she did not rise again. For over seven weeks she lay with unbroken patience and unclouded radiance, and when everything that could be done by the skill of others and her own fortitude had been done, and we had to admit of defeat, she was told that her life was ended. Then, as clearly as if a voice from heaven had proclaimed it, we knew that her faith and her works had not been in vain. She was ready. She just settled herself down as an obedient child told that it must sleep. She bade us all farewell as though she were but going on another journey which would end with the greetings of a happy return. She told us that, had she to begin life again, she would pray to be allowed to live it in the same way; she commended to us the people and the causes she had been helping, and on September 8 died, when the sun was robing itself in its setting glory and filling the room with the mournful light of early evening. "She had no fear of death, and we need have none for her," she wrote of Mary Middleton. I can but apply the words to herself.

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## *Chapter IX*

### IF——

ONE who knew her well, Mrs. Bode of University College, writing in the *Times* a day or two after her death, said: "Margaret MacDonald has been called a 'champion of women workers,' 'a leader in women's movements,' 'a statesman,' '*la plus charmante femme du monde*.' She was certainly these, and certainly also something that not one of these words expresses. She was a woman who, with a width of mind and a balance of judgment that would have been remarkable in a man, kept to womanhood the fresh joyousness of a girl (her laugh was always a girl's laugh) just as she kept the severe honesty of unspoiled early youth. . . . Wherever she went she carried an influence that daunted and shamed selfishness, pettiness, and every unworthiness in public life and public work. . . . Her life was a steadying and building force. What might she not have accomplished if that



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life, cut off in its prime, might but have run the whole course—if she had time to do all that she could have done?"

"If she had time—"

The uncertainties of life and the vanity of men are often proclaimed by an edifice that is crumbling before it has been built. A confusion of broken pillars, of grass-grown courtyards where the foot of the possessor never fell proudly, of rooms never sheltered from the wind and the rain, of windows through which only the yellow dead moon has shone, of silence where there was to have been gaiety and feasting—such are the home and the temple that it is the fate of many men to leave behind them. Still, it is not all vanity; it is not all of the dust that perishes. From its deserted ruin rises the ethereal idea of its completeness, and though abandoned it has not lost the triumphant power of its promise. The idea which created it haunts it and crowns it with commanding stateliness. Such was her life—a temple incomplete, a tale untold, a battle unended—a beauty and a promise nevertheless which required no more years for their perfect revelation.

I have written of her mother's diary suddenly ended after a happy entry telling

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of the coming of a little life. Happiness, hope—a sudden silence. That is the symbol of her own life. Just when over the threshold of forty, just when effort is most vigorous, just when she is entering upon her full possessions of influence and power, death comes and bears her to the grave, where all forget and are forgotten, "neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun."

We have seen children playing gleefully in the summertime, and in the midst of their play the good mother comes and gathers them up in her arms. They ask that they may finish their laughter and end their games, but their hour has come. It is time for them to rest, and, laying their heads upon the breast of the wise mother, they close their eyes in the sunshine. Thus it was with her. She was called to sleep whilst it was still day, and before the chilly shadows of night came up with dew-wet arms to enfold her.

They say that away in some hidden cavern protected by enchantment the good knights of King Arthur lie asleep in their mail, their weapons by their sides and their horses saddled in their stalls. Near by lie a sword which some chosen one is to draw

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when the time is fulfilled, and a bugle which he is to blow. Then the enchantment will be broken and they will ride out to establish a reign of justice and blessedness in the world. Surely to that secluded cavern a few others have been borne who have ears for the trumpet and, if not arms for the sword, sustaining blessings for those who wield it. And of those may we not imagine that she is one, and that there she rests for but a little time, whilst we grope for the secret which is to set free the sleepers and bring to the people the blessing of peace?

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